

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Fire attack' boys lied, police say

A boy who suffered serious burns from lighter fuel made up a story about being attacked because he thought he would get into trouble for playing with matches, police said yesterday. Derek Cripps, 7, of south-west London, was still recovering in hospital last night. He started a police manhunt by telling officers that he was playing with his friend Paul Guglietti, 8, in King George's Park, Wandsworth, on Wednesday when he was grabbed by a black man who sprayed fuel on his face and set it alight.

The boys' lie was uncovered when people who had seen them playing with fuel and matches rang police after seeing reports of the boys' claim. Det Supt Roland Heming said: "The boys have ended up in a lot more trouble now. Their parents are furious." A hospital spokesman said Derek should make a full recovery. Police are to take no action.

Cattle cause concern

Keith Meldrum, the government's chief veterinary officer, is to visit the Czech Republic amid concern at imported East European cattle that may be carriers of foot-and-mouth disease while not showing the symptoms. About 840 cattle are thought to have come here from Eastern Europe since last August. Blood tests show that at least 230 have foot-and-mouth antibodies as a result of vaccination. Treated animals cannot be legally imported because of the danger that they might transmit the disease to unprotected cattle.

Delay for post sell-off

Privatisation of the Post Office is expected to be delayed for at least a year because of pressure on the government's legislative timetable. No decision has yet been taken but when the cabinet draws up outline plans next week for the next parliamentary programme it is expected to include privatisation of British Coal, but not the Post Office. There is still no agreement on whether it should be disposed of as a single business or broken into three — the Royal Mail, Post Office Counters and Parcelforce.

Firemen revive parrot

Firemen saved the life of a 50-year-old Heavenly Blue parrot by giving it oxygen from breathing apparatus after finding it unconscious in its cage early yesterday. Its owners had fled a fire in their home in Horsbarn, West Sussex. "It was a very inert parrot when we found it," a fire brigade spokesman said.

TV firm investigated

The Independent Television Commission is to investigate allegations that Tyne Tees Television is in breach of its franchise commitments. The move comes after a complaint from the shadow heritage secretary Ann Cwyd, right, that Tyne Tees was in danger of abandoning its commitment to regional programme making in the wake of its merger with Yorkshire Television last year.



Army tests new kit

Trials begin later this year of a new clothing system for the British army. More than 2,000 troops will test the kit, which will be phased in from 1995. In all conditions. They will have a series of specially designed layers of clothing, similar to items they already buy for themselves, rather than the traditional shirt, pullover and combat suit.

Powerboat driver dies

John Hill, of Cheltenham, a leading Formula One powerboat driver, died yesterday when his boat overturned as he was competing in a world championship race off Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates. There was no other boat near his at the time and the water was calm. Hill, 59, won the world championship three times.

British Rail guest in splendid isolation



At your service: Moirra Bridger, the only passenger to take up BR's offer of free overnight accommodation, was waited on by staff

Labour's new policy on Bosnia follows crisis of confidence

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

JOHN Smith last night toughened Labour's stance on the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina with a proposal that the United Nations threaten the Serbian aggressors with air strikes.

The Labour leader said the UN should meet immediately to intensify economic and military sanctions. But it should also issue an ultimatum to the Serbian forces telling them that unless there was an immediate ceasefire and the killing of Muslims was halted, the UN would begin air strikes on supply and communication lines. "Such actions must be punitive if they are to be effective," Mr Smith said.

The new Labour stance, drawn up after urgent discussions yesterday between Mr Smith, Jack Cunningham, the shadow foreign secretary, and David Clark, the shadow defence secretary, came on the day that party rivals giving support over the leadership's cautious line. But it was clear that the change had been prompted by the deepening crisis in Srebrenica.

An influential group of 17 Labour MPs, including several Smith loyalists, supported the use of ground troops to protect civilians, and the left-

wing journal *Tribune* openly backed Baroness Thatcher's call for a firmer response.

Tribune said Labour's response to the conflict was "miserably inadequate", and it accused Dr Cunningham of "appearing the appeaser", and failing to offer more than trilling criticisms of the government's "craven" policy.

Mr Smith's statement last night was the first time that Labour had associated itself with air strikes. It fell a long way short of the demands of the MPs, but was clearly designed to distinguish Labour's stance from that of the government.

The Labour worries were voiced by MPs from all sides of the party. In a joint statement they said that military intervention confined to humanitarian aid bordered on hypocrisy "when the children we feed are subsequently decapitated by Serbian shells".

They went on: "The time has come to use military force to end the systematic assaults upon Srebrenica and other civilian populations in Bosnia. Serbian territorial aggression must be checked and the ethnic cleansing stopped. If this can be achieved by the threat or use of air power alone that would be preferable, but if

it requires active engagement of troops on the ground we believe the crisis in Bosnia merits that scale of commitment."

The Labour leadership said the MPs were entitled to express their views, but the statement was not party policy. "They are asking us to contemplate full-scale military action. This is not our stance."

One of the statement's signatories, Malcolm Wicks, MP for Croydon North West, said: "Margaret Thatcher is right, and many of us have been saying that for a long time in the Labour party. It is about time the West saved this situation. This is the most urgent situation imaginable and we need decisive action."

Mr Wicks described the Serbian aggression as being "about the scale of the slaughter and atrocities which are comparable to the Nazi atrocities of the 1930s and 1940s". The MPs' statement added: "The government's hand-wringing now smacks of appeasement. Sanctions alone will take too long to be effective."

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Unions ponder their next move after second Friday strike

Continued from page 1

ter, in which they traded insults, both men appear to hold each other in contempt.

Paul Watkinson, BR's group personnel director, is confident a compromise can be reached over compulsory redundancies but the union's demand for a moratorium on contracting out work is much trickier.

Mr Watkinson has conceded that if there is no breakthrough, BR lawyers may be asked to see whether they have any means of forcing the union members back to work. However, any legal move against the RMT would be likely to be ruled out as the strike followed a legal ballot and falls into the category of a legitimate trade dispute.

Talks between Aslef and BR negotiators, which resume on Monday, have been described

as "hopeful" and legal action, which might jeopardise that progress, is not at present being contemplated.

Yesterday British Coal and the National Union of Mineworkers disagreed over the effectiveness of the second 24-hour strike by miners. British Coal claimed that this time more union members had reported for work and that coal was produced at 20 of the 40 operational pits. Ken Capstick, vice-president of the Yorkshire NUM, accused British Coal of peddling "propaganda" by claiming essential safety work at pits constituted coal production.

Doing Tying to butter up disgruntled passengers, British Rail laid on a special sleeper service at Paddington last night and on Thursday (Nicholas Watt writes). Only four people booked into the

"hotel on wheels", but BR did have one grateful customer.

Moirra Bridger, a diabetic stranded at Paddington on Thursday night after her train to Swansea was cancelled, was given a free first-class berth. "Without the sleeper I would have been left tripping around in the dark looking for somewhere to stay which is not good for a woman," she said.

As MTS Bridger emerged into the daylight on platform seven yesterday morning she was effusive in her praise for BR. Two guards tended to her every need: one fetched medical supplies from St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, and they served a full English breakfast after she went for a check up. "It was incredible," she said. "I've never been in a sleeper before."

Taking the strain, page 14



Competitive spirit: a London taxi driver delivers an apposite message

Cautionary Hurd looks out of touch

The British government is being left behind by the rapid changes in the Bosnian conflict — both by events on the ground and, equally important, by the international reaction to them.

The cautious policy of ministers is looking increasingly untenable. Not only is the Clinton administration moving towards tougher action but the bipartisan consensus in Britain against more direct intervention is breaking down. John Major and Douglas Hurd are no longer in tune with public and international opinion.

This week may turn out to have been a turning point. That is partly because of the horrific events in Srebrenica. But this has been matched by the growing sense that "something must be done", triggered by Baroness Thatcher's interviews on Tuesday, by Lord Owen's trenchant comments and by the subsequent debate in the Commons.

The initial response of both ministers and Labour leaders was to brush aside Lady Thatcher's comments as, in Malcolm Rifkind's words, "emotional nonsense".

Labour at first maintained its policy of staying close to the government, while merely calling for fresh initiatives. As *Tribune*, the left-wing weekly, argued yesterday, Labour seemed never to be advancing "more than trilling criticisms". Its editorial opened with the striking sentence: "Margaret Thatcher is right." That view has increasingly been heard from Labour members of Parliament, including several leftwingers.

Consequently, yesterday, John Smith decided, after consultations with the cautious Jack Cunningham, to toughen

Labour's line, both over sanctions and in urging an immediate United Nations ultimatum threatening air strikes unless there is an immediate ceasefire.

Labour therefore looks as if it is in tune with the shift in public opinion while the government appears to be lagging behind.

Douglas Hurd still sounded cautious yesterday. He did call for a stepping up of sanctions, but he remained dubious about the impact of air strikes against the Serbs, though not ruling them out absolutely. However reasonable his worries are about the possible impact of tougher action on Boris Yeltsin ahead of the Russian referendum, to be held a week tomorrow, that approach looks out of touch with events.

More significant, the Clinton administration was last night moving rapidly towards immediate action. Much may change over the weekend in the United Nations Security Council and in discussions among the allies.

Not only has a gap opened up between Washington and London but John Major no longer has the assurance of majority backing at Westminster, even though many Tory MPs remain worried about the risks to British lives of more direct intervention. The government will almost certainly have to shift its position. Mr Major, Mr Hurd and Mr Rifkind are going to have a busy weekend.

PETER RIDDELL

Calls grow for Serb air strikes

Continued from page 1 which are fuelling this war, by air," he told ITN. Asked if that meant bombing Bosnian Serbs was becoming more of a possibility, he said: "Interdicting the supplies for this war has become very much more of an option."

Lord Owen spoke as it was disclosed that Baroness Thatcher, who has this week stepped up her campaign for tougher action by the West, is to visit Croatia. She has accepted an invitation to receive an honorary degree from Zagreb University, although her office played down suggestions that she visit soon.

Earlier, the Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown said the people of Srebrenica were paying the price for the "pathetic and appalling failure and timidity of action by the West".

As the clamour for the lifting of the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims grew, the government emphasised the problems that would be caused by such action. Douglas Hogg, the Foreign Office minister, said all humanitarian work would have to stop in Croatia and Bosnia.

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CORRECTION

In today's Weekend section the article on the NutraSweet London Marathon refers to the legend of Pheidippides's run from Marathon to Athens. It should have said it was to proclaim victory over the Persians.

MEMORIES OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

A VOYAGE THROUGH INDO CHINA ABOARD THE MS CALEDONIAN STAR
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For our voyage from Singapore to Hong Kong we will be joined by two eminent military historians who have a particular interest in the history of South East Asia. Many who join us for this voyage through recent history will have their own very personal memories of events that took place during the Second World War and we are promised lively and fascinating talks and discussions on board during our days at sea.

Indeed the scope of these talks will be wide ranging from the British Opium Trade with China and the Opium War of 1842, which led to the British acquisition of Hong Kong, to more current events with the American War in Vietnam. The 150 years in between will provide us with an ample list of events, but in the main our concentration will be focused on the Second World War. The Fall of Singapore, 1942; The Sinking of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse off Kuantan, Malaya, 1942 and the Fall of Hong Kong in December 1941.

More current events and particularly the recent history of Vietnam will be covered by Brigadier Peter MacDonald whose recently published book, *Giap: The Victor in Vietnam*, offers a fascinating insight of the general who humbled both the French and the Americans in Vietnam. In 1990 Peter MacDonald interviewed General Vo Nguyen Giap in Hanoi. He also spent time with the Vietnamese Army serving officers and veterans to tell the story of the longest, and perhaps the strangest war of the twentieth century.

Also on our journey through the South China Sea there will be plenty of time to relax and enjoy the considerable comforts of the MS Caledonian Star one of the world's best loved small ships. We cannot also forget that we shall be cruising in one of the most beautiful corners of the world and our excursions ashore will allow us to explore the wonderful scenery and learn more of the people and their cultures. After rewarding days ashore we shall return to the air conditioned comfort of our ship for good food and company and interesting talks and discussions.

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OPENING IN CANTERBURY SOON

Palacio case adds to fear of athletes in contact sports contracting Aids

Champion with HIV is stripped of boxing title

By JOHN GOODBODY, SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

FEARS of sportsmen contracting Aids through body contact have been revived by the case of Ruben Palacio, the Colombian boxer stripped of his world featherweight title after testing positive for HIV.

Many British sports clubs and organisations adhere closely to Health Education Authority (HEA) guidelines, which were updated last November to deal with the risks of cross infection when participants in sports such as rugby and soccer receive cuts. Most follow the HEA recommendation that there should be a single-use, disposable cloth with a bucket of clean water to treat each new incident.

Colin McMillan, the British boxer who lost the title to Palacio in September in a fight in which both boxers were cut, was relieved to hear yesterday that the challenger had tested HIV negative before their bout.

McMillan said yesterday: "I have been told that the chances of my having contracted the virus were infinitesimal. I am very relieved, because when I first heard the rumours yesterday I was shocked and so was my wife. It is something that you think

can never happen and I watched a video of the fight again. There was a lot of blood about."

During the bout, McMillan was cut near his nose and the Colombian by his right eye. McMillan said: "My first thought was that I would need a test but, after taking advice, I understand there is no need for a test and my mind is now at ease."

He said that his main emotion was not relief for himself but sadness for Palacio. "He must be going through hell at the moment. He has a family of his own and I really feel for him."

This week the Colombian underwent a routine medical examination by Dr Alan Trotter, a doctor of the British Boxing Board of Control, before his scheduled title defence against John Davison in Washington, Durham, which was to have taken place tonight. He left London yesterday for Colombia, where he was due to undergo another examination.

Ed Levine, president of the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) championship committee, confirmed the HIV findings yesterday after British board officials had declined to comment and said the WBO had no choice but to strip Palacio of his title.

He said: "You have to protect the fighter from boxing so as not to endanger his opponent or the referee or, in fact, anyone else who may

come in contact with him. It is very sad for the young man."

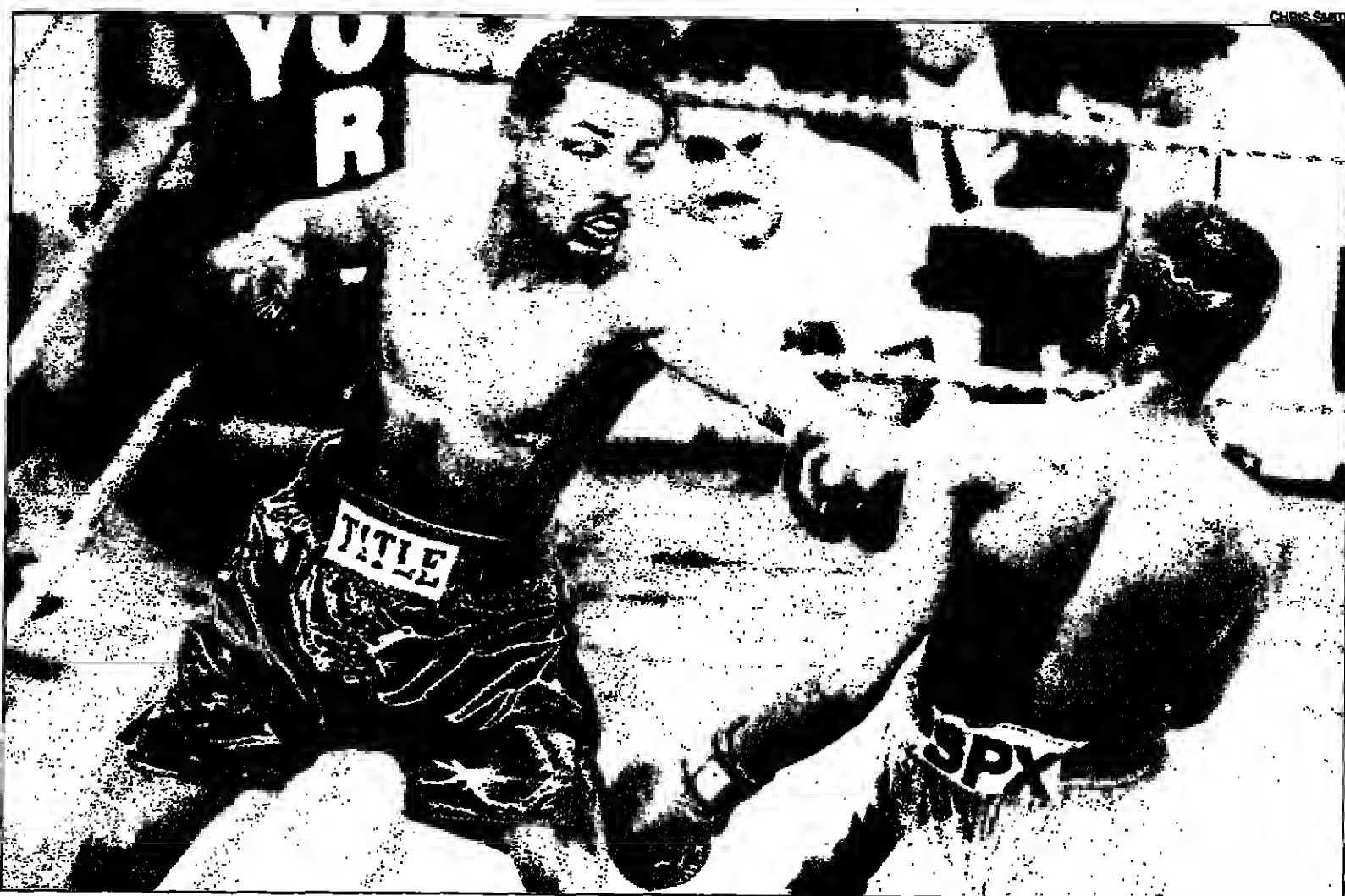
In May 1990, the medical journal *The Lancet* recorded the only known case of a sportsman probably contracting the HIV virus from a clash with a rival. A letter from Italian doctors said the virus

was likely to have been passed on when one football player, who was suffering from Aids, clashed heads with another and the blood from their damaged eyebrows mingled.

The second player was subsequently found to be HIV positive. British sporting bodies have been particularly careful to carry out HEA recommendations. All boxers visiting Britain have to undergo a blood test.

No rugby player is permitted to stay on the field if he is cut. In Rugby Union, the referee will order the player off

the pitch to be treated and for the cut to be covered. In Rugby League, a wounded player has 15 minutes to be cleaned up off the field during which time a substitute is permitted. Rugby and football clubs have been urged to switch from communal baths to showers.



Ko'd: Ruben Palacio, left, has been stripped of his world featherweight title after testing HIV positive before tonight's cancelled bout

Marathon entrants beat the rail strike

By JOHN GOODBODY

ENTRANTS for the Nutra-Sweet London Marathon easily beat the train strike yesterday to secure places in the event. Many simply ran along the streets they will be pounding tomorrow to register their names for the capital's annual sporting attraction.

By last night, more than 16,300, a record number, had checked in at Jubilee Gardens, near Westminster Bridge, the finish of the 26 mile 385 yard race. The event will be televised by BBC1 and will feature the clash between Liz McColgan, the world 10,000 metres champion from Britain, and Lisa Ondieki, of Australia, a silver medal winner at the 1988 Olympic Games, with the Briton able to earn more than £300,000 if she wins with a time under two hours and 20 minutes.

A further 10,000 runners should register today for an expected field of 26,000. Organisers estimate that the usual number of about 9,500 people out of the 35,750 acceptances will not run because of illness, injury from preparing for one of sport's greatest occasions, or because their families and friends have persuaded them they cannot complete the distance. However, by giving up their chances this year, they automatically get places for next year.

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Climbers lost in Caucasus despaired of being rescued

FROM ANNE MCELROY IN MOSCOW

FOUR British climbers who spent six days wandering in sub-zero temperatures in the Caucasus mountains arrived in Moscow yesterday and told how close they had been to death.

Looking thin, bedraggled and sun-burnt but unhurt, they said they had despaired of being found. The rescue service was combing the north face of Mount Elbrus while they, due to a mistake by their guide, had descended the remote southern face. They fly back to Britain today.

Speaking on behalf of the group, John Milledge, 28, a doctor from Sheffield, said they had begun to give up hope of being found after four days spent vainly trying to get out of the uninhabited snow-swept mountain range.

"We saw one helicopter but it flew straight on. We felt sure then that they thought we were dead and had stopped the search. It was the lowest point," he said.

The men vowed to keep moving but Dr Milledge admitted: "There were times for every one of us when we feared that we would not get out of this. It was an unspoken rule not to talk about it as a group. At the most we admitted it to one or two others singly."

Dr Milledge, Kenneth White, 42, a civil servant from



End of ordeal: John Milledge in Moscow yesterday

Dumbarton, Myles Plant, 42, of Lincoln, and Thomas Keeley, 27, a computer engineer from Manchester, travelled with the Nuncaton specialist holiday firm High Adventure and set off to climb the 18,000-foot Elbrus.

They lost contact with their base camp in blizzards on Sunday afternoon when they were close to the summit. They struggled in temperatures as low as -30C to get beneath the snow-line before nightfall and tried to follow a river gorge out of the mountains without success.

The party had taken supplies intended only for a ten-hour expedition and survived the last 72 hours without any food, rationing their drinking water which they heated over fires in the evenings. They slept in abandoned sheds and kept cheerful by imagining what they would eat when they got back to Moscow.

Dr Milledge's father, Dr Jim Milledge, an expert on exposure injuries who had taken part in the first stage of the expedition, spoke of his relief at being united with the group. "In the dreadful conditions, we had the greatest fears for their safety and even when they knew they were safe, we worried about their

health. Apart from one minor case of frostbite they all survived extremely well."

One volunteer suffered a broken pelvis when he fell on jagged rock during the search. The climbers have pledged to help him.

With visibility down to ten yards, the party found its way to safety by following pylons in desolate countryside through knee-deep snow. Their guide, whose ski boots had become intolerably uncomfortable, walked the last three days in sandals.

On the sixth day they reached a remote dacha where the two caretakers gave them soup and tea and radioed the town of Pyatigorsk for help. The men are thought to have walked 60 miles and to have been only a day away from collapse.

Asked if the experience had put them off mountaineering, the men, all experienced climbers, said they would pay greater heed to weather conditions. "It has increased my respect for the mountains," Dr Milledge said. Mr Keeley said: "I'm not in the mood just now. Give me a couple of days."

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Drug addict freed after crime spree

By IAN MURRAY

WITHIN hours of seeing a hit and run driver jailed for killing his father, Jason Reed, 20, began to use crack cocaine and embarked on a £150,000 crime wave to pay for it, Bristol Crown Court was told yesterday.

However, the court freed him on bail after hearing how he was trying to break the addiction which had lured him into a life of crime.

Appearing in the same courtroom where he watched the hit and run driver sentenced last November, Reed pleaded guilty to a catalogue of offences he had committed since then. They included six burglaries, stealing five cars, two assaults, two charges of driving without insurance and

one of dangerous driving. He asked for 133 other burglaries, all in a ten-week period, to be taken into consideration.

Arrested in January, Reed was said to be deeply repentant. After hearing how he had reverted to being a "pleasant, likeable character", the court freed him on bail for 28 days before sentence, so experts could decide whether his addiction could be cured.

Ian Bullock, for the defence, said Reed previously had an exemplary character but was devastated when his father was killed. "It was the final straw when he stood in this very court and saw the driver responsible for his father's death sentenced to only two years in prison."

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Secret chamber may solve pyramid riddle

A wonder of the world may yet yield up more secrets, although experts disagree on the significance of new discoveries

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

THE Great Pyramid at Giza may contain two unexplored chambers that could hold ancient artefacts or even the lost treasures of the Pharaoh Cheops.

Archaeologists, using a robot to investigate a previously unexplored southerly passage leading from the queen's chamber, have discovered a slab adorned with copper handles 65 metres up the shaft. There are now plans to investigate another unexplored shaft going north.

The discovery of the southerly shaft's stone door, the result of investigations to see how air flows in the pyramid might be improved for visitors, has triggered a dispute over its significance and what might lie behind.

Rudolph Gantenbrink, a German engineer who developed the team's robot, believes there is a chance that a secret chamber might be there that could have frustrated grave and treasure robbers. The suggestions have dismayed scientists at the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, who have been leading the investigations and who invited the engineer to join the team.

Dr Gunter Dreyer, of the institute, said yesterday: "This engineer has got the idea that there is something big behind the door. But it is all imagination. No chamber has been discovered yet."

Dr Eiddon Edwards, one of Britain's most distinguished Egyptologists and former keeper of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum, described suggestions that the Pharaoh's treasure

was behind the door as nonsense. He believes it is possible, however, that a secret chamber with a religious significance awaits discovery.

"It is a very important find, possibly a sensational one," Dr Edwards said.

The discovery of the door was made on March 22 but has remained secret until now. Mr Gantenbrink wants to deploy his robot, which has video cameras, with a tiny fibre-optic camera that can be threaded under a small gap in the door. The alternative is to dig 25 metres down from the surface through hard stone.

But Dr Dreyer said the 20 cm wide passageway meant that it was unlikely that any objects of value could have been transported up the shaft.

"It makes no sense at all. You could not bring anything in. Other passageways in the pyramid are accessible. This new one is a nice new detail but, until we have carried out further investigations, nothing more," Dr Dreyer said. He believes that the shaft probably served a religious purpose, allowing the soul of the Pharaoh unhindered passage



Past wonder: archaeologists at work on the Cheops pyramid at Giza, which is believed to contain two unexplored chambers

being less sceptical is based on evidence that the Egyptians often built structures inside pyramids before walling them in.

"It would not surprise me if

'Obviously you do not have a stone blocking an entrance like that unless there is something behind it'

sage to the sky gods. Indeed, the passageway in the 4,500-year-old building is aligned with stars in the Dog Star Sirius, which represented the goddess Isis.

Dr Edwards' reasons for they find that sort of thing behind this door. Obviously you do not have a stone blocking an entrance like that unless there is something behind it," Dr Edwards said.

Mr Gantenbrink, speaking

yesterday from his home in Munich, said it was also hoped to send the robot up a similar unexplored passageway on the pyramid's northern side. "We penetrated 20 metres inside but had to stop. There are two bends and the remains of iron bars in the corner, which may have been left there by a British archaeologist, W. Dixon. We will have to remove these so we do not get stuck," he said.

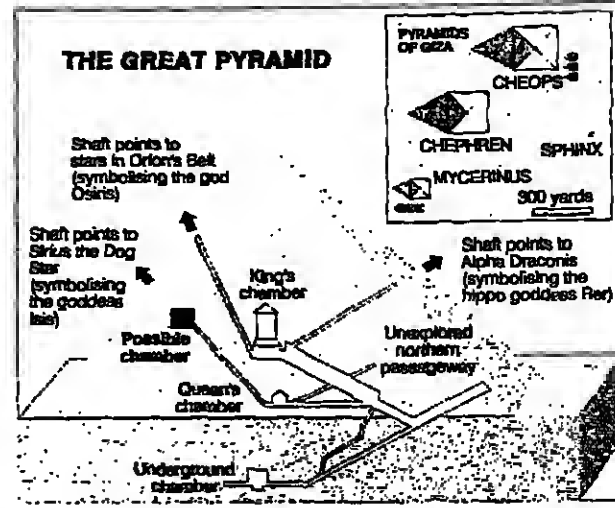
The riddle of the two passages may never be solved. The institute is concerned that the unscheduled announcement by Mr Gantenbrink may have damaged relations with the Egyptian

antiquities department, which traditionally orchestrates news releases.

"They were not aware that this was happening. The Cheops pyramid is a sensitive subject," Dr Dreyer said.

Mr Gantenbrink, who honed his skills in robotics designing remote submarines for the North Sea oil industry, said he was unrepentant. His dream has been to match emerging technologies to archaeological investigations. He has contacted various Egyptian officials but without a response.

"It is purely their fault. If you try to hide a sensation you will have a big mess."



Pharaoh saw future in stone

By OUR TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

CHEOPS, the Pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid at Giza, pioneered the practice of burial in a stone sarcophagus, one of Britain's leading Egyptologists said yesterday.

Dr Eiddon Edwards, former keeper of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum, said that during the time of Cheops there was a belief the dead Pharaoh copied the sun god Ra.

"He passed through the body of the sky goddess, Nut, every night and was reborn every morning. They identified the sarcophagus with Nut. So when Cheops was put in a stone sarcophagus, he was really being put in the womb of Nut to be reborn," he said.

Subsequent pharaohs developed the idea by having their sarcophagi designed in the shape of a womb, said Dr Edwards.

The findings, details of which will be published in a revised edition of Dr Edwards' book *The Pyramids of Egypt*, are based on detailed studies of pyramid texts.

Apart from pioneering the stone sarcophagus, little is known about the man who, around 4,500 years ago, built one of the wonders of the world. Cheops was the second king of the 4th Dynasty ruling over a Nile valley land stretching 1,000 miles up to the first cataract at Wadi Halfa.

Indeed, most of the pyramid was probably built by contract workers who, during seasonal flooding of farmland by the Nile, would have been at a loose end.

Car ban for Love Hurts star

By A STAFF REPORTER

ADAM Faith, the actor and former pop star, was yesterday banned from driving for 21 days and fined £800 for speeding at 110mph in a car used in his current television programme *Love Hurts*.

Faith, 52, who answered to his real name Terrence Nelms-Wright, had previously pleaded guilty by letter to speeding on the M1 and failing to produce his driving licence and insurance certificate within seven days. He appeared in court in Rotherham yesterday to plead with magistrates to allow him to

keep his driving licence because of contractual commitments.

The actor was stopped by police on the M1 near Sheffield as he was driving home in a £145,000 J-registered Mercedes used in the BBC television series.

After the hearing Faith said: "The court had no choice but to ban me. I went too fast and got caught."

Stephen Smith, his solicitor, told the court that Faith was driving home from Sheffield after appearing in the stage show *Alfie*. The motorway was

clear and the only other vehicle about was a police car. "There was no question of any danger being caused to other road users," he said.

Mr Smith said it was a contractual term that Faith was able to drive and disqualification would present a "nightmare" for the production crew.

Constance Shepherd, chairman of the magistrates, said the bench had taken into account the mitigating circumstances. No separate penalty was imposed for failing to produce documents.

Killer of surveyor walks free

A MAN who killed a chartered surveyor with one punch in an argument about a water leak was freed by a judge at the Old Bailey yesterday. Desmond Toussaint, 34, admitted the manslaughter of Victor Oster and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment, suspended for two years.

Judge Michael Coombe said he was not forgetting the suffering of the victim's family or public opinion "in taking what may seem to be an unjustifiably lenient course". But Toussaint, an engineer, was a "thoroughly decent" man who had endured the leak for four years.

The court was told that Mr Oster, 63, died from a brain haemorrhage after being punched by Toussaint when he visited his flat in Harrow, northwest London. Toussaint was taking legal action against neighbours over the water leak, and was angry that the surveyor, from Pinner, had not found its cause despite two earlier visits.

Jonathan Goldberg QC, for the defence, said Toussaint "lashed out in an explosion of anger".

Kitchen case defeats the tax man

By JAMES LANDALE

A MAN who runs a small business from his home has won a victory which could affect thousands of similar people by thwarting an attempt by tax inspectors to charge business rates on his kitchen.

Julian Wedgwood, 56, who has a small greetings card publishing business at his home in north Devon, won an appeal by proving that the kitchen where he works is not used solely for business purposes.

The Inland Revenue, which even measured the size of his kitchen table to make his assessment, is now only charging him £400 for his other working area, a scullery where he keeps tools and a work bench. Mr Wedgwood is considering contesting the new valuation.

Translated into annual business rates, this means Mr Wedgwood's bill drops from £249.60 to £166.40.

Mr Wedgwood pays £850 a year council tax on the 18th century rectory home in Hunsbury, from where he has run his business for the last six years. He said yesterday that the decision was a victory for every small businessman who works from home. "I have

been hit by the banks and my cash flow has been squeezed."

He said: "To have to pay this business tax on top of the council tax strikes me as a bit terrifying."

Mr Wedgwood, who won a Times award of £500 in 1976 for "bringing business to rural England" by setting up a small picture framing company, said the decision was important because more people were beginning to work from home.

"If the Inland Revenue starts trying on other people what it tried on me, it will become an increasing problem."

He said that anyone who had a computer in the corner of their lounge might be at risk. "It just shows that small

businesses are having every last penny bled out of them by a bunch of bureaucratic lunatics," he said, adding that it was hard to imagine anything more absurd than taking down the measurements of a kitchen table. "It is pretty obvious that a kitchen with all its trappings such as cookers and pans has got other uses."

Alison McKechnie, a director of Ownbase, which campaigns for those who work from home, welcomed the decision in Mr Wedgwood's favour. "This looks like a very impressive victory for people who work from home," she said. "Quite a number of them must be worried about being charged business rates and our advice is not to designate one room for work."

A spokesman for the Feder-

ation of Small Businesses said they received many queries about business rates. He said: "Where people work at home and perhaps use a study, we suggest they have a television in there so it can also be used for leisure purposes or perhaps a sofa bed so it becomes a guest room."

However, an Inland Revenue spokesman, who said he did not know the particulars of Mr Wedgwood's case, said: "The business rate is only charged for rooms that are used exclusively as business premises."

He said that it was unlikely that businessmen could put a television and a comfortable chair in their offices and pretend they were used for leisure to avoid the uniform business rate.



VIENNA - A MUSICAL WEEKEND

OVER THE WHITSUN HOLIDAY, SATURDAY 29-MONDAY 31 MAY 1993

Vienna is without doubt one of the loveliest cities of Europe. Graceful buildings which house great museums on the Ring give way to the enchanting cobbled streets of the city centre, with intimate squares and courtyards setting off the glorious Baroque buildings. By way of contrast the older eastern quarter of the city offers the visitor a maze of winding streets and buttressed houses.

The highlight for many of our weekend visit will be an evening at the Musikverein where the Vienna Mozart Orchestra will perform works by Mozart in a grand setting.

Also included is a visit to the beautiful Wachau Valley and the dramatically situated great Baroque Abbey of Melk on the banks of the Danube. A visit will also be made to the Durnstein, a charming village where it said Richard Coeur de Lion was imprisoned and later on to Weissenkirchen for an organ recital in the 16th century church followed by dinner in the courtyard with wine tasting.

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DAY 2 Full day at leisure in Vienna. Optional excursion to the Vienna Woods, Baden, Mayerling, Heiligenkreuz and Hofbrunnmühle to the house where Schubert composed many of his songs.

DAY 3 Morning free. Afternoon visit to the Wachau Valley ending with dinner in Weissenkirchen. Drive to Vienna airport for the return Monarch flight departing at 22.00 hours. Arrive London Gatwick at 23.15 hours.

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Prints of Carroll's young friends for sale

By SARAH JANE CHECKLAND ART MARKET CORRESPONDENT

LEWIS Carroll's two passions — photography and entertaining children — are combined in a remarkable group of albumen prints on offer at Sotheby's next month.

The photographs are being sold by descendants of two of the Victorian author's favourite sitters, Alexandra Kitchin and Julia Arnold. Both were daughters of close friends. Images show Alexandra (or Xie as she was nicknamed), playing a violin in a formal velvet dress and lying fast asleep in her nightdress on a sofa. According to a letter from Carroll to Henry Holiday, illustrator of *The Hunting of the Snark*, in order to achieve excellence in a photograph, all one needed was to take a lens and put Xie in front of it.

The 12 images of Julia show Carroll's delight in fancy dress, and include the girl decked with flowers as an allegory of spring, and in Chinese dress with a parasol.

In her 1929 memoirs, Julia's sister Ethel recalled the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as a bringer of delight in those far-off days. The sister's grandson, Francis Huxley, says the Arnold sisters described their friendship with Carroll as a life-giving oasis in a drab childhood. The



Julia Arnold, pictured by Lewis Carroll

girls' father was poor, and they had only one pair of boots and could not go to parties together. Mr Huxley believes that Carroll set out to cheer the girls up by making the hero of *The Hunting of the Snark* appear in seven coats and three pairs of boots.

The pictures are numbered on the reverse in violet ink by the author. Some are signed Lewis Carroll, rather than his real name, Charles Dodgson. Estimates for the May 7 sale include £800 for Xie in tunic and sandals, circa 1875, to £4,500 for Xie with violin.



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BT's transatlantic battle could lead to cheaper calls

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

TELEPHONE bills should eventually fall on both sides of the Atlantic as a result of a looming battle between two of the world's biggest telephone companies, British Telecom and AT&T of America.

BT, which has already gained limited footholds in niche markets in America, is seeking consent to lease the use of other companies' networks so that it can compete on equal terms to offer services to big-spending business users. AT&T wants parallel access rights in Britain.

Each company is happy to have the other as a competitor; only governments stand in the way.

For BT, there is much to gain. Although under some pressure from its infant rival Mercury in its home market, BT, with annual sales of £13.3 billion, ranks with AT&T, NTT of Japan, the German post office and France Telecom as one of the world's

five biggest telephone companies. If AT&T were stripped of its equipment manufacturing operation, BT would be of similar size.

Both companies regard transatlantic competition as a crucial cockpit for an increasingly competitive world. In Europe, national telecommunications monopolies are

crumbling. Karel van Miert, the EC consumer affairs commissioner, has thrown his weight behind plans for a directive to bring about their progressive, but complete, destruction. At the outset, business customers are likely to benefit the most, but as efficiency improves, there should be cheaper calls, better service and wider choice for all consumers.

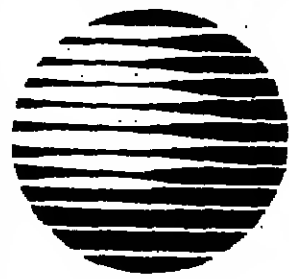
In America in the late 1960s, executives at MCI, now the country's second largest long-distance carrier, won a landmark ruling which led to the break-up of AT&T, then America's national telephone monopoly, into seven regional monopolies, known as the "baby Bells", and a long distance carrier, which kept the AT&T name.

Today AT&T still dominates long distance traffic in the United States, retaining a 60 per cent market share. But MCI has carved out 30 per cent of the market and Sprint has captured 10 per cent.

Customers can select which long distance carrier they wish to use, and the carriers compete with one another on price. Calls start out on the local network, switch into the long distance link, and then back into the so-called local loop.

In Britain, telephone users can choose to route long distance calls through the Mercury network in exactly the same way. Cable television companies are even beginning to duplicate BT's local links by offering telephone services alongside film channels.

Competition drives down costs, but is not without complications. The biggest users of telephones, especially internationally, are businesses. For years, governments have overcharged them to subsidise the high cost of maintaining domestic lines. For competition to work, re-balancing of charges has to occur. That is why BT is beginning to mimic American telephone companies, which often offer free local calls in exchange for a higher fixed charge. After all, if the wires are there, it costs little to use them.



New phone codes to cost business £200m

By TONY DAVE

BRITISH Telecom is sending out a million leaflets this month to prepare people for the biggest ever change in the telephone system, even though it is still two years away.

BT is starting early on its campaign for "Phoneday" — April 16 1995, when almost every telephone number will alter — to try to avoid the confusion which surrounded the London number changes. The company's forward planning has served only to fuel the anger of businessmen, who say that the sweeping changes are unnecessary and will cost them hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The introduction of new dialling codes for five cities — Bristol, Leeds, Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield — and the insertion of the number "1" after the first 0 in almost all numbers, will allow BT to provide millions of new numbers for its customers.

Businesses says, however, that the change will place a huge burden on the little firms trying to lead Britain out of recession. Stephen Alambritis, the federation's parliamentary officer, said: "We seem to be faced with constant changes in phone numbers and each one involves substantial costs in changing stationery and signs. BT should seriously consider reducing phone bills to compensate for the cost."

BT has reminded its critics that the change has been ordered by Ofcom, the telephone service watchdog, which estimates the cost to industry at £200 million.

BT hopes that its advance warnings will help to reduce the burden. Alan Croft, the project manager, said: "Most businesses are likely to order new stationery or signs in the space of two years and, by giving them this much notice, they can plan the change when it suits them."



Transplant call: a bone marrow donor is being sought for toddler Glenn Challenger, of Blackburn, Lancashire, who is the only case in Britain of the world's rarest leukaemia

Purchase order for historic Crescent

By MARCUS BINNEY, ARCHITECTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE owners of Buxton's famous Georgian crescent have been served with a compulsory purchase order by Robert Key, the national heritage minister, to the delight of conservationists. Mr Key said: "This is the first time we have used these powers. We are not prepared to see these Grade I listed buildings deteriorate further through neglect and indecision."

Three years ago, winter gales ripped holes in the roof of the empty St Ann's Hotel, which occupies the major part of The Crescent, and High Peak district council sent in contractors to protect the building with a temporary roof covering. Dry rot continued to spread and some of the stonework on the facade became so precarious that the front of The Crescent was fenced off.

In December, Mr Key gave the owners, Capitalise, three months to start on comprehensive repairs, estimated at £1 million, to the roofs, masonry and interiors.

Ros McCoola, spokeswoman for The Crescent joint action committee, said: "We are absolutely delighted the government has taken charge. We have been praying every night that Mr Key would serve the order." The Crescent was

built in the 1780s to the designs of John Carr of York for the 5th Duke of Devonshire, who was instrumental in the development of the Derbyshire town as a spa.

It is widely considered to be one of the finest crescents in the country, second only to the Royal Crescent in Bath.

Trouble flared in 1989, the hotel was closed under a hygiene order. Subsequently the owners went into receivership and the main creditor, the Bank of Egypt, transferred the buildings to the newly-formed Capitalise. At the same time Derbyshire county council closed the public library housed in the former assembly rooms at the other end of The Crescent.

Next week the compulsory purchase order will be advertised in local papers and if Capitalise objects, as is likely, a public enquiry will be held.

English Heritage recently offered Capitalise a grant of £255,000 to cover 75 per cent of the cost of roof repairs, but it was not accepted within the time limit.

George Bingham, leader of the High Peak council, said: "Over a month ago we wrote to Capitalise offering to negotiate to buy St Ann's, but there has been silence ever since. The council offer still stands."

Seeds of hatred cannot be allowed to grow

Albert H Friedlander

Today, we look at a Europe in anguish: rape, famine and genocide storm across the skies of Bosnia and we stand aghast at the cruelty visited by humans upon their neighbours and even families. Under these circumstances, it seems more than odd to our neighbours that we Jews should commemorate the Holocaust this weekend, reminding ourselves of events which happened more than half a century ago.

I am asked: "Why this self-laceration, this tearing open of old wounds and morbid fascination with past sufferings in a world crying out with pain at the new wounds which ethnic groups inflict upon one another?" There is no easy answer, but it does require an answer which rises out of the basic human condition.

Suffering is part of every life — at least as long as we live in an unredeemed world. This

Germany, which seemed to have learned its lesson, there are new outbreaks of anti-Semitism and racist fears on the political platforms.

A Russia released from communist oppression now permits wild outbreaks of prejudice often directed against Jews. With much sadness, it must be said that the freed Orthodox faith, separated from modern religious scholarship and the penitence for past persecutions, which is present in the European Christian church, goes back to the anti-Judaism which the Russian church practised under the tsars. Even Great Britain records small seismic tremors, mindless violence directed against Jewish cemeteries and synagogues.

All of this needs our concerned attention, a united disavowal of xenophobia by all of us, not just by the Jewish community. What has to be

said, again and again, is that racial and religious prejudice has to be fought with every fibre of our being; it is the only feasible attack upon anti-Semitism, as well. Jews cannot point to their own wounds and portray themselves as victims; that is counter-productive. Unless the fight against xenophobia is won, there is no hope for any minority within the community.

There is large public revision against the violence which kills babies and mothers and cloaks itself under the term "patriotism". Women and men of good will are speaking out, and have the right to expect help from the public. The Jewish community, always noted for its charity, has reached far beyond parochial boundaries, sending substantial help to Bosnia and Somalia, and has joined the pursuit

for peace within this land. Nevertheless, it still feels that special frisson of fear when it encounters German, French or Russian anti-Semitism. If, then, we observe Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) this weekend, it is not to view ourselves as victims or to ask others to mourn for us. We are our own remembrances. But we also know that the dragon seeds of hatred still produce harvests of hatred. If we do not examine that history, it may come back to destroy our world.

Somewhere, sometime, the world must learn that "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4). When the darkness leaves the human mind, the world will grow lighter. Rabbi Albert H. Friedlander is dean of Leo Baeck College and rabbi at Westminster Synagogue.

Roadworks continue to bring M-way delays

By PETER VICTOR

AA Roadwatch recommends that motorists avoid the following trouble spots this weekend.

There are works on the M1 between junction 9 (A5) and junction 10 in Hertfordshire. In Leicestershire there are contraflows between junctions 18 (A428) and 19 (M6) and there is a closure on the M6 approach to the M1. In Derbyshire there is a contraflow between junctions 28 and 29 and the north-bound exit slip road is closed at junction 29. In South Yorkshire contraflow traffic between junctions 33 and 32 continues to cause delays. Lanes are closed in both directions on the M3 between junctions 7 (A30) and 8 (A303) in Hampshire and the southbound entry slip road to junction 7 is closed.

There are contraflows between junction 4B (M25) and Junction 5 on the M4 in Berkshire, and a 50mph limit applies. In Gwent there are restrictions each way between junctions 24 and 26 with a 50 miles an hour limit. At

West Glamorgan there is a contraflow between junctions 41 and 42 with a 40 miles an hour limit and long delays at times.

The M5 in Hereford has restrictions both ways from junction 6 (Worcester North) to junction 8 (M50) and a 50 miles an hour speed limit applies. The M8 in Strathclyde has lane closures and diversions at junction 16. The M20 in Kent has contraflows between junction 5 and junction 8. There are further contraflows at junction 13. The M25 has contraflows which are likely to cause long delays between junctions 15 (M4) and 16 (M40).

In Cheshire the M56 has just two lanes open both ways between junctions 12 and 14 and the M62 in Greater Manchester has lane closures and speed restrictions at junction 12.

For more detailed information, call the AA Roadwatch 24-hour phone line on 0336 401 737.

AA Roadwatch, page 18

Beef shortage will soon push up price

By IAN MURRAY

BEEF may be in short supply for the next couple of months as farmers adjust to new ministry regulations for paying premiums. Special offers for Britain's traditionally favourite meat are therefore worth seeking out at the moment as prices are likely to start rising soon.

Asda have some good beef bargains with topside and silverside cuts selling for £2.37 per lb, a reduction of 69p, and frying steak down 27p per lb to £2.89. Tesco has reduced the price of sirloin steak by 70p per lb to £4.28 and their fore ribs are down 30p per lb to £2.14.

Fore ribs of Scottish beef at Harrods are down from £3.80 to £2.40 per lb for the next fortnight. Sainsbury's have reduced their fresh mince by 10p per lb to £1.28.

Pork remains the cheapest meat, however, and Gateway and Tesco are both selling boneless shoulder roasts at just £1.09 per lb, a saving of 30p. Boneless leg joints, which were selling in most stores at £2.29 per lb are down 50p per lb at Waitrose and 35p per lb at Asda. Sainsbury's is selling boneless chops at £1.98 per lb, a 60p discount.

Bad weather and bank holidays have both reduced fish supplies and pushed up prices. Cod and haddock are in prime condition, however, and fillets are selling at around £3 per lb.

Tesco, which has more than 150 counters and claims to be the largest fishmonger in Britain, is largely able to overcome short-term supply problems by contract volume buying.

This means the chain has been able to peg its April prices for large cod and haddock fillets at the lowest levels since 1989.

Cod pieces of up to 2lbs are selling at Tesco for between £2.39 and £1.99, while haddock of up to 3lbs sells for £2.68 to £2.19.

The small fish fillets of both varieties are even cheaper, although slightly less succulent.

With an 'R' in the month for only another fortnight, native oysters are coming to the end

of their season, although cultivated replacements are available at 50p each. Crabs are the best fish buy of the week, selling at £2.50 per lb. Try flaking their white meat into a cheese fondue for a special treat.

Smoked salmon shoppers at Harrods are being given an extra 25 per cent free on every pack purchased. This means, for example, that a £15.90 1lb packet will contain 20oz.

New season cauliflowers are at their best. Medium sized heads with milky white florets are selling for around 50p.

Pineapples from the Ivory Coast are in prime condition and should cost no more than £1.30.

For gourmet NutraSweet London Marathon spectators, Harrods have prepared a picnic menu to bring luxury to the kerbside wait.

It includes egg mayonnaise with smoked salmon (£1.95), chicken en croute flavoured with herb mousseline (£1.45 a quarter) and fresh fruit flan at £2 each — or two punnets of fresh strawberries for just £1. Competitors are not advised to try it.

Supermarket best buys: Asda: Brie, £1.99 per lb; size 3 eggs, £1.69 for 18; ham on bone, £2.76 per lb; kiwis, 69p for 12.

Gateway: Fresh chicken cordon bleu, £1.75 a 10oz pack; peeled prawns, £1.39 for 4oz; avocado pears 35p each; grapefruit, seven for 84p.

Iceland (frozen food packs): beef topside, £3.49 for 1½ lbs; 20 economy burgers, £1.69; 6 haddock steaks, £1.99; 2lbs peas, 69p; 2lb broccoli, 99p.

Sainsbury's: whole salmon, £1.98 per lb; prime gammon, £1.49 per lb; cheddar, £1.99 per lb; 10oz double cream, 59p; Anchor butter — buy four at 67p and save 50p.

Tesco: cottage cheese, £1.19 per lb; 10lbs white potatoes, 99p; golden delicious apples, 35p per lb.



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Daily Telegraph

Ghetto anniversary highlights moral case for armament

STARVED, confined to cellars, tens of thousands of civilians were reduced to a desperate existence; hopelessly, they appealed for arms to fend off massacre by a ruthless army whose goal was "ethnic cleansing". Srebrenica in April 1993? Or the Warsaw ghetto in April 1943?

While neither Srebrenica nor Sarajevo under Serb siege is the Warsaw of the Nazi occupation, they raise the question of how Western bystanders should behave and how to reconcile public conscience with national interest. As world leaders head for the Polish capital this weekend to mark the 50th anniversary of the ghetto uprising, the moral issues have again been highlighted. Dr Marek Edelman, one of the few surviving leaders of the Jewish uprising, remarked that "the relationship of democratic governments to genocide has not changed in the past 50 years". Indifference, and a need for stability, continue to outweigh morally driven action, he said.



Roger Boyes, recalling the Warsaw Jewish uprising of 1943, looks at the arguments for arming Bosnia's Muslims

Baroness Thatcher has, in calling for the arming of the Bosnian Muslims, highlighted the moral dimension of the conflict which has, in the past months of tired debate, gone by default. The generals have been arguing about the practicality of intervention. Meanwhile, the non-interventionists have shrugged off the moral issues, denying that the Bosnian war is anyway a defining conflict. Since the West cannot end all wars, it should confine itself to limited help for victims unless national interests are directly affected, they say.

Yet European wars are different. The siege of Srebrenica is not just about the death of Bosnia, or of Yugoslavia, but about maintaining a multicultural society that has helped to shape Europe. Non-inter-

ventionists, says Dr Edelman, are betraying this idea and thus betraying Europe.

Srebrenica could mark a turning-point for Serb political strategy, and it provokes thought about what kind of military assistance would address the moral dilemmas. The fighting in eastern Bosnia is motivated by the Serb wish to create corridors linking Serb communities that could be isolated when the Owen-Vance peace plan is implemented. But there is also a growing awareness among Serbs that, despite the territorial gains of the past year, they have lost the war. The Owen-Vance map has, under US pressure, been quietly altered in the Muslims' favour. The Bosnian presidency is supposed to rotate on ethnic lines.

The Serbs do not believe they have achieved a Greater Serbia. Their minimum military aim — a land corridor in northern Bosnia — eludes them. Srebrenica could thus be depicted as the Serbs' last big successful battle. After the fall of Srebrenica, they might be ready to accept the Owen-Vance plan.

Should the West punish the Serbs for capturing Srebrenica?

If so, how? The lesson of the 1943 uprising might be to send arms — not to Srebrenica, it is too late for that — but to Bosnian Muslim communities elsewhere. It could be argued that this would allow the Muslims to restore their dignity as a fighting force, and take revenge for war crimes, even if that did not much change the military equation, it would be a moral step.

Such a decision would be wrong. Last summer new weapons could have helped the Bosnians to stop the Serb advance. Now the arms would not be able to save lives, or restore the country's territorial integrity: it is the end-game in Bosnia. Arming the Muslims is not a clear-cut moral issue. It is a way of avoiding the critical option: to declare outright war

on Serbia, aimed at enforcing a peace settlement that would probably resemble a version of the Owen-Vance plan.

Washington: The US Holocaust Memorial is to be opened in the capital next week (Martin Fletcher writes). President Clinton, who will address 10,000 Jewish survivors of Nazi genocide, has yet to deliver on last year's election campaign pledges of US ac-

tion to rescue Bosnia's Muslims. Representing Britain at the ceremony will be Malcolm Rifkind, the defence secretary, who this week dismissed Lady Thatcher's call for military intervention as emotional nonsense.

US considers strikes, page 1
Simon Jenkins, page 12
Leading article
and letters, page 13

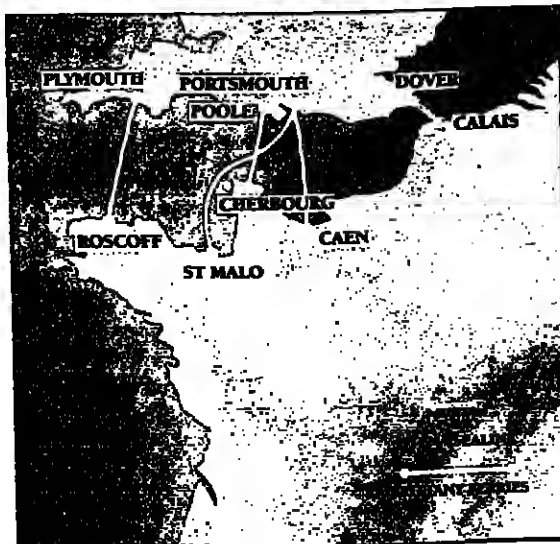


Air of despair: a Tuzla radio ham recording pleas from Srebrenica. One said: "The offensive is unrelenting. In the name of God, do something"

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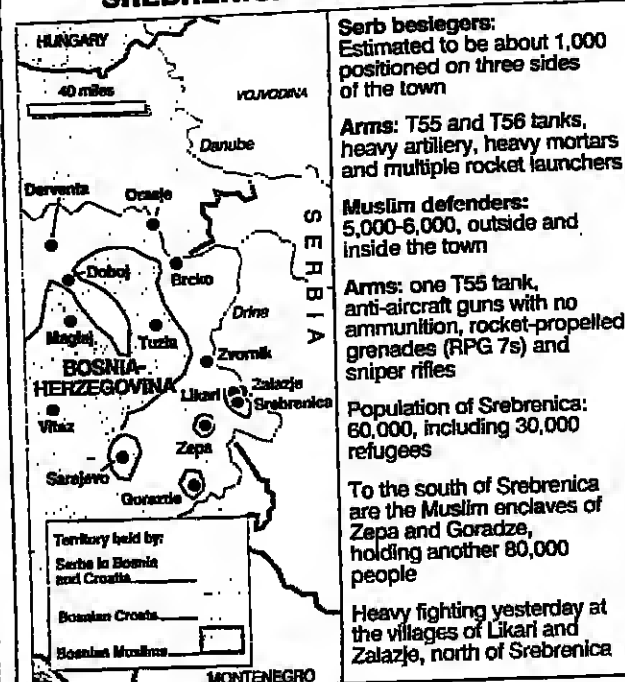
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SREBRENICA: balance of forces



Unequal battle approaches its inevitable end

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE battle for Srebrenica has been typical of the style of fighting seen throughout the 12-month war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The surrounding Serbian "Goliaths" with their heavy guns and mortars keep up the pressure as they creep steadily forward and the defending Muslim "Davids" hurl back whatever ammunition they can lay their hands on.

In personality terms, there is a genuine David and Goliath analogy. Leading the besiegers, although from afar, is General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb commander, a stocky, florid 51-year-old whose father died fighting with Tito's communist partisans. His reputation is fearsome.

Leading the besieged is Nasir Oric, the Muslim commander. He is only 23 and, ironically, a former bodyguard of Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian president. The young commander does not have the same charismatic hold over his troops as does General Mladic and there are persistent reports from the besieged town of a lack of disciplined control over strategy.

The Muslims' principal advantage over the Serbs has been geographical. The old town of Srebrenica, which was first settled in by the Romans, is tucked in a cleft in the mountains. Their main disadvantage has been the lack of firepower and limited ammunition.

According to the latest assessments from military observers inside the town, the 5,000-6,000 Muslim defenders have one tank, a Soviet-made T55, a small stock of shells that they use sparingly and anti-aircraft guns with no ammunition. But they have larger stocks of light weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades (RPG 7s), sniper rifles and anti-tank missiles.

The T55 tank, which has no diesel fuel, is used as artillery and is normally parked next to the hospital. The defenders hold positions inside and outside the town and, according to local reports, they have been known to infiltrate through Serbian lines at night.

Inside the town, the mood among the people has become progressively depressed. The

handful of United Nations military personnel — four military observers and seven Canadian soldiers — say the wounded inside the hospital are suffering from the "Saigon syndrome", a state of hopelessness. "You can smell the gangrene as you go in," one UN official said.

In spite of the low morale among the Muslim population and dwindling stocks of ammunition, the Serbs have held back from taking the town by storm. With their firepower, which includes multiple rocket launchers, they could have taken Srebrenica weeks ago.

However, they have concentrated on capturing villages at the edge of the town, gradually reducing the size of the Muslim pocket. Yesterday, the fiercest fighting was at the villages of Likari and Zalazje, north of Srebrenica.

Since mid-January the Serbs have captured three smaller Muslim enclaves, Kamenica, Cerska and Konjevic Polje. However, Srebrenica is a vital strategic goal for the Serbs in their plan to capture the west bank of the Drina river that forms the Bosnian-Serbian border. From there they could threaten two other Muslim enclaves at Zepa and Gorazde, which hold about 80,000 people.

General Mladic has told UN officials privately that he had no intention of storming Srebrenica. But undoubtedly the Serbian advance has been stalled because of the international focus on the town and, in particular, the courageous attempt by General Philippe Morillon, the UN commander in Bosnia, to save Srebrenica from conquest.

In spite of their apparent sensitivity to world criticism, the Serb forces around Srebrenica are reported by UN officials to be motivated by a desire for revenge. The town was seized by the Serbs in April last year but retaken by the Muslims the following month when up to 2,000 Serbian soldiers are reported to have been killed.

Since then the sprawling settlement has also been a launching pad for Muslim guerrilla raids on Serb villages and towns along the Bosnian bank of the Drina which have cost hundreds of dead.

How 56 Muslim casualties in siege town galvanised Western opinion against Bosnian Serbs

Reckoning time in valley of death

Tim Judah reconstructs the terror of the creeping barrage that killed or maimed everybody who could not run fast enough

HALF an hour after the shelling of Srebrenica began last Monday, the wounded were pouring into the hospital on cars, wheelbarrows, trolleys, anything that people could find. Dr Piet Willems began the selection. "Him, him, out him, him, out, out." He was deciding who he would try to save and who would die.

The shelling began at 2.15pm. It was a perfect spring day in the small town which lies in a valley above the Drina river, which forms a natural frontier between Bosnia and Serbia. There were crowds of people on the main street snaking up through the centre to the town square, passing the little hospital and the post office, the school and the shattered building of Srebrenica Woman department store, which today is a guarded store of flour and other commodities that the UN has managed to talk past the Serbs.

The shelling was methodical. It started at one end of the main street and moved down the centre of the town, killing and maiming all those who could not run fast enough. The death toll was 56, including 15 children.

Dr Willems, a surgeon of the Belgian branch of the medical charity Médecins sans Frontières, was in the post office when it began. He was not posting a letter. The PTT, as it is known, had become the home and headquarters of the 11 Canadian soldiers and the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who form the UN contingent.

Their sleeping bags lay behind unused counters. The telephone booths, files and probably stamps of a vanished land, Yugoslavia, were still there. "Muhammad, our helper, ran in shouting," Dr Willems said. "There are bodies all over the road. It's a massacre. We've got to get them to the hospital."

The old maternity clinic, a small three-storey building which passes now for the hospital, is across the road from the PTT. Just over 100 dying and wounded were brought in. Most of the dead were left where they lay until the shelling stopped, but some became entangled with the living, tossed on to the carts that carried them to the hospital. Those that died in the hospital were left on the floor. Outside a dead man lay on a cart. A dog slept underneath. Inside a child writhed in agony. The hospital wall was splattered with blood.

Two other doctors moved through the jammed corridors. There is no electricity in Srebrenica and only the makeshift operating theatre has lights powered by a generator. The doctors did what they could for the less seriously injured. "I was bandaging with a torch held in my mouth," Dr Norbert Scholzen says.

Monday had begun quietly. People were walking the streets, just as they did every day. The town was crammed. Its prewar population was 6,500; today there are 30,000 people there, mostly refugees from villages already conquered and torched by the Bosnian Serbs. Every habitable room in the town sleeps ten people, the classrooms of the town's school, now a refugee centre, each sleeps a hundred. In the rest of the shrinking Muslim-held enclave around the town there are believed to be another 20,000 locals and refugees.

The majority of those on the streets were men. The women were cooking, looking after their sick, their children, their elderly — and making parachute suits. "I noticed many people wearing shirts and trousers of this strange material," said Louis Gentile, of the UNHCR. "I thought they were rather stylish. Then someone told me they are made from the parachutes

from the American airdrops." In the school playgrounds, just off the main street, children were playing football, the older ones on one side of a fence and the younger on the other. Mr Gentile says that the next day, when the UN evacuated the wounded, their flesh still hung on the fence.

Mr Gentile, 29, a Canadian who had been in the town for a week, was in his car when the shelling began, trying to establish contact with the UNHCR in Kiseljak on his radio. He went into the PTT. In the first minutes it was not clear that this shelling was different from any another. Shells have fallen on Srebrenica for a year. Local doctors said that they had never had more than 40 wounded in a day, and those were some of the worst days. On Monday, they had more than 100 in half an hour.

Mr Gentile went to the shelter in the basement of the PTT to find it full of the local police. "We sent the cleaning women who work in the PTT down there, too." He said the shelling was utterly calculated. It started at one end of town and in just over 20 minutes it had moved up the high street and then stopped. At about 4pm there was a renewed but less deadly barrage.

The pretty Serbian Orthodox church looks down benignly on the main square. Unlike a thousand mosques in Serb-held territory, it has not been dynamited. But unlike most houses in Muslim Srebrenica, it has not been damaged by Serb artillery.

As the shells crashed down, Srebrenica became a ghost

'Looking at the small body lying in the school playground, you think you should do something, you think you should pick it up and bury it, but you realise that would be desecration'

town. When the noise died down, Mr Gentile went out with the Canadian "blue berets" in their armoured personnel carrier and drove up the hill through the centre of the town. "A shell exploded 50 metres to our right," Mr Gentile says. "I took the roof off a house. I'm sure there were people in it. Then we passed the playground. I saw seven bodies, two were children, one was decapitated." He sucks in his breathe. "It's a cliché, I know, but the road was red with blood. That's it. I didn't want to believe what I was seeing."

A quarter of an hour later, the vehicle returned and passed the playground again. It stopped. "There was blood and guts everywhere. You think maybe you should do something," Mr Gentile said, referring to a small body that had lain before him. "You think, 'I should pick it up and bury it'. But the refugees were all inside the school. You realise they will come and bury it. It would be a desecration otherwise."

In the hospital Dr Willems began operating an hour after the shelling began. He was helped by an underqualified doctor who had done 1,200 such operations in the last year. Dr Willems, who had been in the town for 12 days, had never done war surgery and was terrified. The operating theatre was vulnerable to shelling, on the top floor, under the roof and with a window.

All the injuries were shrapnel wounds. Dr Willems managed seven operations on six men and two children before, at midnight, he ran out of sterilised instruments and his staff said they could do no more. The brain of one man was pouring from his eye. Dr Willems could not save him. "When he died, his brother



Road to freedom: crowds surrounding a UN convoy in Srebrenica, hoping for safe passage out of the Muslim town, and witnessed by one of the few foreign photographers there

said, 'We were a family of five sons. Four died today, him in the street and three on the front'."

Srebrenica has seen war before — but nothing like this. During the second world war the flag of Fascist Croatia flew on the bridge across the Drina and the Muslims wielded the whip. Serbs were killed and on the run, but nowhere in Bosnia was the war as brutal as today.

The name of the town derives from its only precious commodity: silver. In the Middle Ages the ancestors of the people of Srebrenica fought with the ancestors of their Serb besiegers. The kingdom of Bosnia was locked in war with the principality of Serbia. But the silver miners were Saxons, ancestors of the Germans. In 1460, the fighting subsided and Srebrenica fell into obscurity: a little hillside town with a mine deep in the Ottoman Empire, never to be heard of again in the outside world until today.

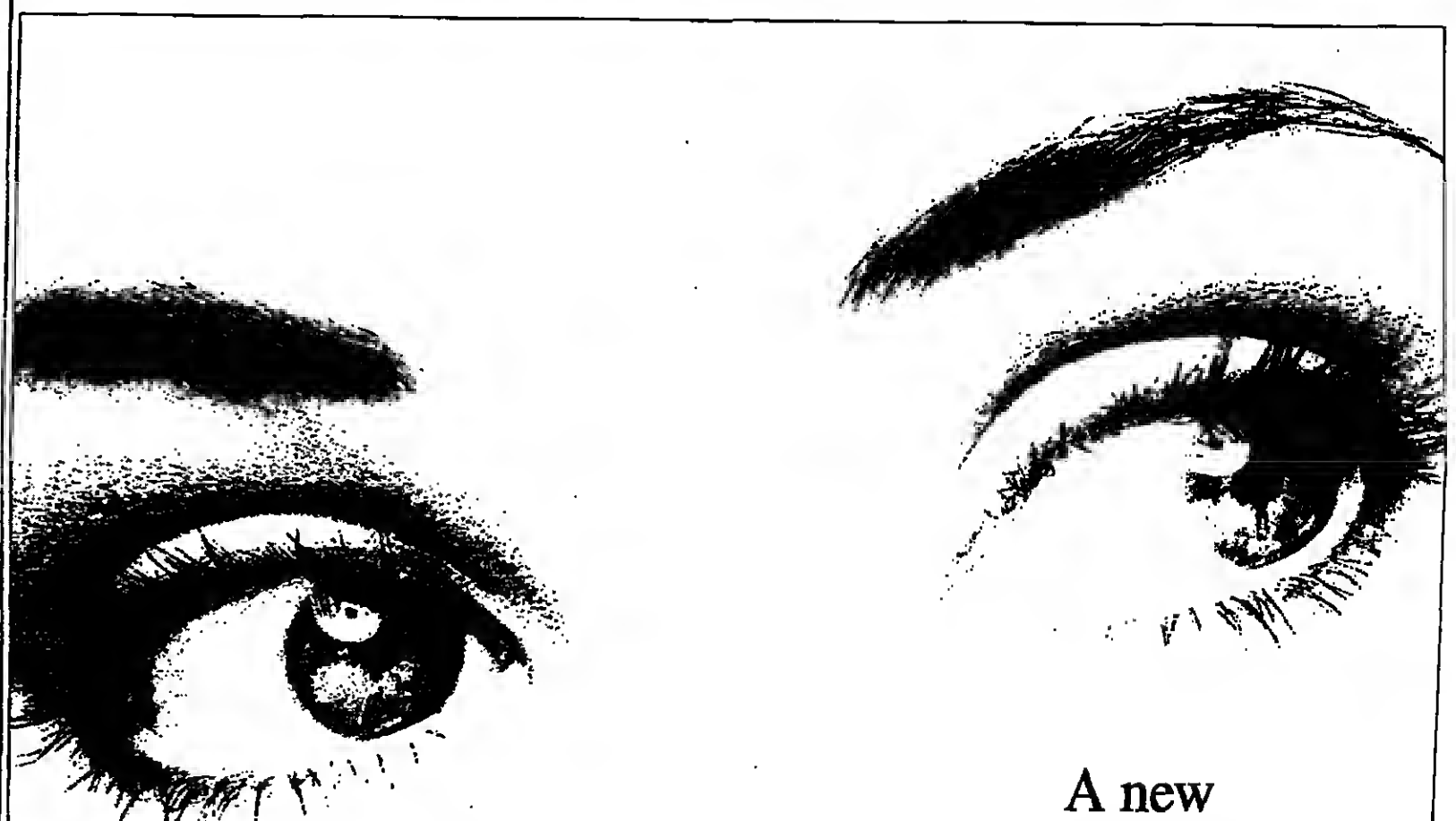
In 1991, Muslims were three-quarters of the local population and Serbs a quarter. But, as elsewhere in Bosnia, the Serbs owned a higher proportion of the land. They also needed — and need — the strategic Drina valley to weld all their territories into one.

Before Monday's carnage, Srebrenica was an island of fear. Now it is a land of terror. Everyone wants to leave. There is no more hope of resisting, only the hope of surviving. Last month General Philippe Morillon, the commander in chief of UN forces in Bosnia, told its people that he would not abandon them. The UN ordered him out but he decided to go back in. Serbs deployed crowds of women and children to block his way and prevented him from returning.

Srebrenica's people are unwilling martyrs. They thought they lived in modern Europe. Now they know that they do not, they just want to live. There is a precedent. There is Vukovar. When the Serbs entered that Croatian city, they made for the hospital, taking the wounded men out of the back as the International Committee of the Red Cross clamoured to get inside. Today, Russian troops guard what is believed to be their mass grave in the corner of a muddy field.

Before he left Srebrenica on Thursday, Dr Willems took a felt-pen marker and wrote numbers on the foreheads of the women and children who were to be evacuated. No hope for the men though. "They waved their hands at me, they said 'helicopter', 'evacuation' — the only words they knew in English," the doctor said.

In the Muslim cemeteries of the town, there are many freshly dug graves. "They know they will be able to fill them," Mr Gentile said. He recalled a man and woman standing in the churning dirt and dust as a UN helicopter prepared to winch their wounded little girl to safety. She died before she could be lifted inside. "The child was beautiful," he said. "The mother rocked. She was a beacon of sorrow."



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Amato will offer to go if Italians back reform

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

ITALY appeared yesterday to be preparing to vote overwhelmingly in favour of electoral reform in a referendum tomorrow and on Monday. At the same time, Giuliano Amato, the prime minister, indicated that he is ready to resign after the vote if President Scalfaro wishes.

A spokesman for the prime minister's office said Signor Amato would go to the Quirinal Palace on Tuesday "to study... what procedures to choose to go forward". On Thursday, Signor Amato told Cable Network News that "my impression is that my government is almost at an end".

Signor Scalfaro, however, hinted yesterday that he would prefer not to replace Signor Amato immediately and said it would be up to parliament to pass a vote of no confidence in the Socialist prime minister's coalition if there were to be any orderly change of executive. "We cannot allow the least power vacuum or even the impression that there is a



Scalfaro: MPs would decide on coalition

power vacuum," the president said in Spoleto. A government crisis "would have to have, first of all, the voice of parliament".

Campaigning for the referendum ended yesterday with such opponents of reform as Leoluca Orlando, the former mayor of Palermo and leader of the anti-Mafia La Rete (Network) party, calling for an early general election as the only way out of the corruption scandal embroiling the nation. "In every country where the political class is corrupt and investigated, one goes to the polls," Signor Orlando told a crowd in Padua. "We instead are the only country where one changes the rules of the game instead of voting."

An opinion poll for *Il Giornale* yesterday predicted that between 74 and 78 per

cent of the electorate would vote in favour of introducing a first-past-the-post polling system, similar to the British or French model, and indicating that the "yes" campaign spearheaded by Mario Segni, the referendum's main promoter, was proving effective. Only 10 per cent of those polled remained undecided. "With a 'yes' vote we will save Italy from sinking," Signor Segni said yesterday.

He is asking Italy's 45 million voters to introduce a winner-take-all system for 238 of the 315 seats in the senate while retaining proportional representation for the remainder. If the "yes" vote wins, the chamber of deputies (the lower house) is expected to follow suit. Signor Segni left the Christian Democrat party last month as a protest against corruption and Mafia infiltration of its ranks.

Behind-the-scenes negotiations have already begun to replace Signor Amato's moribund government after the referendum. Achille Occhetto, leader of the former Communist Democratic Party of the Left, has called for "an exceptional government" supported by all parties to push through electoral reform. Signor Segni wants an "institutional government" headed by the Speaker of one of the parliamentary chambers but has not ruled out heading an administration of his own if the "yes" vote is strong enough.

President Scalfaro is likely to replace Signor Amato if there is a high vote in favour of reform. He may, however, first give him a chance to form a second, wider coalition.

Voters also face seven other proposals on their ballot papers — for the abolition of the agriculture, tourism and state shareholdings ministries, removal of environmental controls from local health authorities, ending state funding of political parties, decriminalising personal drug use, and abolishing state control of banks' boards of directors.

Mass arrests: Police yesterday arrested Massimo Ciminatti, 34, and 55 other members of the Magliana gang which they say was involved in most of the high-profile murders, kidnaps and drug-related violence in the Italian capital in the 1970s. In the south the authorities issued 18 warrants for a drug-running Mafia faction. (AP)

Moving from PR, page 12

Smiles ease miles on track to decay

Michael Binyon, on his Russian rail journey, reflects on the decidedly more civilised style of travel 80 years ago. Fourth stop: SARATOV

WHEN Karl Baedeker published his guide to Russia in 1914, he advised travellers arriving in Saratov that an *izvoschik*, a one-horse cab, from the railway station to the town centre cost 40 kopecks. A tram could take visitors to the Cathedral of the Nativity, on the banks of the Volga, and both the Bristol Hotel and the Rossiya, "with lift, fair restaurant and electric light", were recommended.

Modern Saratov, by contrast, with a population of almost a million, is the half-bearing capital of Russia. The natural amphitheatre in which the town lies, between the mighty Volga and high surrounding bluffs, is dominated by the sounds and odours of Soviet-era industry: oil and petrochemicals.

Unlike in 1914, few cabbies now wait at the cavernous, smelly station and most travellers have to bargain with whichever driver decides to turn his car into an unofficial taxi as his comes along the street. In Baedeker's day, 100 roubles were worth £10 11s 2d. Now notes cascade from a traveller's wallet by the fistful and it takes 10,000 roubles to buy £10. No passenger gets into a taxi before haggling.

Travel through the Russian provinces to Saratov and beyond must have seemed altogether more civilised and comfortable 80 years ago. True, the prudent explorer was advised to take "a pillow or air cushion, linen sheets (useful on long railway journeys and in provincial hotels), towels, a coverlet or rug, a

small India-rubber bath and some insect powder". Nowadays, at least sheets, though somewhat grey and crumpled, a pillow, rug and mattress are provided in "soft class", and a portly railway carriage attendant in blue uniform and peroxide hair usually brings in a cheap metal holder with a glass of hot, weak tea brewed in the samovar built into the coach at the end of each corridor.

Baedeker complained that trains in Russia travelled extremely slowly. They have not speeded up, although electric traction has replaced the splendid broad-gauge monsters that used to steam through the snows and forests and pages of Russian literature. The overnight expresses from Moscow to the provinces meander along at 50mph, clanking and buffeting their 15 carriages over lines that have long lost the gliding smoothness once the joy of Soviet railways.

Provincial trains are even slower: from Belgorod to Voronezh, no more than 250 miles, takes 11 hours. The onward journey to Saratov, a further 323 miles, lasts 18 hours, a nightmare ride in a single, stuffy passenger coach, with open-plan bunks, that is hitched to the mail train. Russia's railways visibly reflect the fall of this country into disrepair and poverty. Many have broken windows, peeling paint and lavatories where encrusted filth would deter anyone not driven by necessity.

In parts of the country, especially the north, Caucasus, travellers should be on their guard: many a story is told of locks picked, sleeping gas sprayed under doors, and passengers robbed. Some trains have armed guards.

But there is a camaraderie among passengers and the professional pride of the railway employees that smiles through these signs of decay. Even in the coldest days of Soviet paranoia, Russians used to allow themselves the



quiet hospitality of talking to foreigners on trains, defying a torrent of official propaganda with truth and friendship. Inevitably the talk now is of politics: who will vote for President Yeltsin in the referendum on April 25, who against, what has brought Russia to such a mess, and — the eternal Russian question — what is to be done.

Some of the older people who have rumpled along the lines for more than 30 years are not averse to sharing some of their troubles, while drowning others with several bottles of vodka. They enjoy the chance to smother a foreigner's attention and perhaps have a hope of buying the odd dollar or two.

Ludmila Petrova, a robust and matronly superintendent, has worked on the rail-

ways since leaving her village near Belgorod some 30 years ago. She asked the kind of questions most people want to know: what do foreigners earn? What is life like over there? What do they think of Russia today? Can they please have a copy of their picture? She was proud of her position enforcing the rules: that trains were clean, left on time, obeyed the safety regulations, and the passengers had tickets. Alas, efficiency has declined.

In 1914, a bell was rung three times before the departure of each train: now they glide off with little warning. Unfortunately, then and now, it was extremely difficult to find out the timetable from one provincial city to another, and travellers have to rely on large noticeboards to find out

when, and if, a further connection is possible.

Trains are still overwhelmingly the most common form of transport in Russia, but despite a steep increase in prices, Aeroflot is gradually taking an ever larger share of the travel market. After several journeys, as we approach our next stop in the bandit country of Samara, it is not hard to see why.

□ Minsk: Leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States met in Zaslavl, outside Minsk, Belorussia, yesterday to try to consolidate their alliance. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan said the ten members fell into three groups: those wanting economic and military integration, those wanting greater autonomy, and the undecided. (AP)

□ Trial suspended: The trial of 12 former leading Communists accused of organising the Soviet coup in August 1991 was suspended yesterday after one of the defendants, Aleksandr Tizyakov, was taken ill. Mr Tizyakov, the former head of the Soviet association of industrialists, is in hospital with chest pains. The prosecution agreed to suspend proceedings until his return.

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Points of view: Ludmila Petrova, a rail superintendent, is keen to talk to foreigners, asking about the West and discussing their troubles. Photograph: CHRIS HARRIS

ways since leaving her village near Belgorod some 30 years ago. She asked the kind of questions most people want to know: what do foreigners earn? What is life like over there? What do they think of Russia today? Can they please have a copy of their picture? She was proud of her position enforcing the rules: that trains were clean, left on time, obeyed the safety regulations, and the passengers had tickets. Alas, efficiency has declined.

In 1914, a bell was rung three times before the departure of each train: now they glide off with little warning. Unfortunately, then and now, it was extremely difficult to find out the timetable from one provincial city to another, and travellers have to rely on large noticeboards to find out

when, and if, a further connection is possible.

Trains are still overwhelmingly the most common form of transport in Russia, but despite a steep increase in prices, Aeroflot is gradually taking an ever larger share of the travel market. After several journeys, as we approach our next stop in the bandit country of Samara, it is not hard to see why.

□ Minsk: Leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States met in Zaslavl, outside Minsk, Belorussia, yesterday to try to consolidate their alliance. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan said the ten members fell into three groups: those wanting economic and military integration, those wanting greater autonomy, and the undecided. (AP)

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**Rutskoi
accuses
'corrupt'
Yeltsin
cabinet**

FROM ANTONIO
IN MOSCOW

Deportees defy tanks amid Arab moves to delay talks

BY IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON,
CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN CAIRO AND
OUR FOREIGN STAFF

■ The peace process is in disarray. In a diplomatic Catch 22, Israel refuses further concessions until talks resume: deportees are likely to convince Palestinians to stay away

AS NEARLY 400 Palestinian deportees braved heavy Israeli shellfire in their no man's land in south Lebanon during a march aimed at sabotaging next week's resumption of Middle East peace talks, Palestinian leaders in Washington also pressed for the talks to be postponed.

Their call dealt a blow to Middle East peace hopes and to American prestige, delivering a severe rebuff to Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, who visited the Middle East on his first foreign mission in February with the stated aim of achieving a resumption of talks.

The self-styled "death march" was halted in the late afternoon close to the heavily fortified Israeli lines after one deportee was hit in the chest by debris as a tank round slammed into rocks about 30 yards from the protesters. "It is clear that we cannot go further," Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, a spokesman for the group,

said. However, many of the exiles vowed their determination to win martyrdom and some wore headbands with the slogan: "Dying for the sake of God is our purest wish." It took nearly 30 Israeli warning shots to convince them that further progress would be suicidal.

The protest was timed to coincide with the opening of talks in Damascus involving Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organisation on whether to accept the American invitation to resume talks in Washington next Tuesday with the Israelis. "We wanted the march to awaken the world's conscience which forgot our cause," Mr al-Rantisi said.

Under PLO orders, the Palestinians originally agreed to boycott the peace talks until all the exiles return to Israel under the terms of United Nations Resolution 799. That

condition was watered down later under US, Egyptian and Syrian pressure.

As the Damascus talks opened, leading PLO officials said they would be demanding a short delay in next week's planned resumption of the talks because assurances received from the US and Israel were not yet satisfactory. That demand was finalised in Washington by Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinian spokesman, who said after two days of talks with senior US officials: "The Palestinian side does not feel we can make a recommendation to resume negotiations on April 20 as we had hoped to do."

Western officials claimed last night that the PLO leadership had been affected by the tactics of the deportees, who have relied heavily on skilful public relations to whip up popular Palestinian feeling against any resumption of

negotiations while their plight remains unresolved.

Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, made clear at a summit this week in Egypt with President Mubarak that Israel will make no more concessions to the Palestinians until they are back round the table. The Clinton administration has warned all sides that if talks are not resumed soon, US diplomatic attention will be switched to other issues, such as Bosnia and Russia.

In a related development, suspected Palestinian extremists opposed to the peace process were blamed yesterday for a suicide car bomb attack in the occupied territories that killed one Arab civilian and injured eight Israeli soldiers.

The explosion occurred on the Orthodox Good Friday, which in turn resulted in protests in Jerusalem. Paramilitary police used sun grenades to break up a demonstration by Orthodox Christians protesting against restrictions on the entry of Palestinians into Jerusalem during the Holy Week celebrations.

Photograph, page 16



Bomb anguish: Colombian police officers carrying a woman wounded in northern Bogotá by a bomb that ripped through a shopping centre, killing at least 11 people and injuring

more than 100. The government immediately doubled to 60 years the maximum sentence for terrorism. It said that Pablo Escobar, the fugitive cocaine cartel chief, was responsible

for the blast. He has instigated bombings in Bogotá, Medellín and other Colombian cities that have killed more than 50 people this year and injured hundreds. (Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Opposition raided by Zaire troops

Nairobi: Zaire's President Mobutu, facing international isolation and calls from Western countries to sponsor his overthrow, has launched a counter-offensive against his opposition that is likely to plunge his country further into civil war (Sam Kiley writes).

Mr Mobutu ordered his troops into the homes of leading opponents, including Etienne Tshisekedi. For the past two years he had been satisfied to remain at the head of a country blighted by anarchy and looting sprees by the armed forces whose pay comes only sporadically, but now he has returned to the violent tactics that have kept him in power since he took over Zaire in a coup backed by the American CIA in 1965.

Throughout the Cold War Mr Mobutu's Zaire was seen as a bulwark against communism in Africa and an essential supply base for American clandestine operations with Jonas Savimbi's Angolan rebel movement. Now, faced with the prospect of Zaire collapsing into civil war and ethnic violence, Western countries, including America, have demanded that Mr Mobutu should step aside.

Turks warned

Moscow: Armenia accused Turkey of flying weapons and troops across Armenian airspace to war-torn Azerbaijan up to 15 times a day and hinting that it might try to shoot the planes down, journalists in Yerevan said. (Reuters)

Cholera toll

Harare: Cholera killed 14 people in Zimbabwe in the past week, bringing the death toll to 307 since an epidemic broke out last November. Health officials said that 100 new cases were recorded in the week to push the yearly total to 6,677. (Reuters)

Joining forces

Washington: American and Russian military forces next week will conduct their first joint exercise on Russian soil since the second world war. The Pentagon said American search-and-rescue units will practise with Russian units in Siberia. (Reuters)

Gay meeting

Washington: President Clinton pleased leaders of gay-rights groups by inviting them to the Oval Office to discuss policy matters, but disappointed them by an announcement that he will not be in Washington on April 25 for a march in support of gay issues.

Artefacts found

Peking: Scientists have confirmed by radio-isotope test that stone-age tools discovered in the southern province of Guangxi are about 730,000 years old, making them the most ancient artefacts found in China. (Reuters)

Scent of victory

Kuwait: Former President Bush was showered with gifts — including 96 bottles of perfume and a prized racing camel — as he received the thanks of Kuwait, hailing him as its Gulf war liberator. (Reuters)



Walter Pole accused of murdering Hani

ANC calls strike for Hani funeral

BY MICHAEL HAMLYN
IN JOHANNESBURG
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

LEADERS of the African National Congress and its allies called yesterday for a nationwide strike on Monday to honour the funeral of Chris Hani, the South African communist leader shot dead a week ago. They also urged supporters to defy any government crackdown on protests.

At the same time, it was disclosed that Nelson Mandela, the ANC president, was high on a list of targets for assassination found at the flat of Janusz Walus, the Pole accused of killing Hani. The police disclosed the existence of the hit list soon after Hani's death, but the nine names on it were not published until yesterday.

The ANC itself said yesterday that "suspicious" people had been seen near Mr Mandela's home in Johannesburg. The Citizen said Mr Mandela and his entourage had been followed home last weekend by a car behaving in an odd manner. The Namibian-registered vehicle remained near by for some time. Next day, it drove up and down the street, but by the time police arrived it had gone.

Joe Slovo, the veteran chairman of the South African Communist Party, was also on the Walus list. Johan Steyn, claiming to speak for the right-wing extremist Wit Wolwe (White Wolves), said Mr Slovo's name was also next on a list given to the South African Press Association with a statement warning "the following people to watch out that they don't act wrongly".

Those on that list are Winnie Mandela, the ANC leader's estranged wife, Mr Slovo, Louis Skweyiya (known as Zola), the ANC's director of constitutional affairs, Mr Mandela and Jay Naidoo, the trade union leader. Mr Steyn said: "I am telling you today, Joe Slovo is the next person we are going to murder. His name is first on the list."

The names on the Walus list, disclosed by New Nation, also included Mr Slovo's. Among others listed were R.F. "Pik" Botha, the foreign minister, and Mr Justice Richard Goldstone, head of the commission enquiring into violence and intimidation.



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Ceiling paint, it is sometimes assumed, has a pretty easy life.

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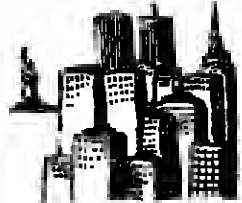
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Alexander Chancellor in New York



The public may be more opposed to homosexuals in the military than President Clinton imagined

Last time I announced in this column that spring had arrived in New York. I was rewarded with a huge blizzard that buried the city under several inches of snow. But that was almost a month ago, and now the season of hope and promise is sufficiently well established for such a disaster to be unexpected. It has been a particularly good week for President Clinton as he approaches the end of his first 100 days in office. In Washington, which is always beautiful at this time of year, he has been out and about among the hordes of visitors celebrating Easter, the cherry blossom festival, and the 250th birthday of Thomas Jefferson, with whom Mr Clinton feels a special affinity because, among other things, his middle name is Jefferson.

On Easter Monday, he presided over the annual Easter egg rolling ritual on the White House lawn in which all American children under eight are invited to participate, though they must expect to wait at least five hours to get in. He used the occasion to attack the Republicans in the Senate for holding up the passage of his jobs incentive bill, which includes a provision for the universal vaccination of children. "Look at those kids," he cried. "They are hostages of the Senate filibuster on the stimulus programme." When he wasn't attacking the Republicans this week, he was talking lyrically about the cherry blossom. "A rapturous sight of nature!" he declared.

Following the arrival of spring and Mr Clinton's success in focusing media attention on his programme for economic recovery, most people seem to have forgotten the embarrassing early days of his presidency, which became bogged down in disputes about illegal immigrant babysitters and whether homosexuals should be permitted in the armed forces. With the eventual appointment of a childless attorney-general, the babysitter problem was solved; but the issue of homosexuals in the military was merely put on the back burner, where this week it has quietly started to heat up again.

Appearing now in bookshops is a 784-page volume entitled *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the US Military*, by Randy Shilts, who wrote an influential early book about the AIDS epidemic, called *And the Band Played On*. His new book is the fruit of an exhaustive investigation into the situation of homosexuals in the military over the past 30 years. It chronicles cases of persecution, and describes the creation of a large homosexual subculture within the armed forces. Its purpose is clearly to provide evidence to encour-

age the implementation of Mr Clinton's election promise to lift all restrictions on homosexuals in the military — a pledge that has been vigorously opposed by the military top brass and by many conservatives in Congress.

Also published this week were the results, alarming for Mr Clinton, of a new survey of public attitudes on this issue. They challenge the findings of other opinion polls, which have created the impression that the American public is more or less equally divided about whether to lift the ban on homosexuals in uniform. This new survey, commissioned by a conservative foundation called the American Security Council, claims to show, on the contrary, that sentiment is actually about five to three in favour of keeping the ban.

A problem that was put on the back burner is heating up again

This result was arrived at by asking more oblique questions than the previous pollsters, who it was suggested, might have been lied to by people who did not wish to be thought of as homophobic. For example, one question not previously asked was "Do you think that people in your area favour or oppose forcing the military to accept homosexuals?" and the response to this was negative by more than three to one. If these findings are believed, they may seriously erode the president's support in Congress on the matter.

Inflaming passions on the other side this week was the acquittal, for lack of proof, of three American marines who had been accused of assaulting three men in a homosexual bar in Wilmington, North Carolina. One of the alleged victims, who is pressing ahead with a civil action against the marines, testified that they had set upon him with the war-cry "Clinton must pay!"

But in the light of all the noise and heat that this question has generated, and will soon generate again, the most surprising piece of news this week came in a new study of male sexual behaviour, the most thorough carried out in the United States since the famous Kinsey report of 1948. This survey, by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, showed that only 1 per cent of American men considered themselves exclusively homosexual (although 2 per cent said they had engaged in homosexual activity at one time or another). The Kinsey report, by contrast, claimed that 10 per cent of American men were homosexuals, a figure that has been generally accepted ever since. With statistical assumptions shifting so dramatically to the advantage of the conservatives in the debate, Mr Clinton's already difficult task will become no easier.

There is more to changing the political ethos of a country than electoral reform, argues David Hine

What future for Italy without PR?



Andreotti: political longevity

Tomorrow, Italians vote on a referendum proposal to abolish proportional representation for the Senate, the upper house of the Italian parliament. Two weeks ago, in a move in the opposite direction, the British Labour party's Plant commission on electoral reform came out tentatively in favour of the so-called "supplementary vote".

In both cases, reform proposals stem from a common concern: the lack of government turnover. In Italy this is attributed to PR and the irreplacability of the centre parties; in Britain, Labour reformers attribute it to a first-past-the-post electoral system and a divided opposition.

By most standards the Italian problem is a good deal more serious than the British one. No British politician aspires to the longevity of the septuagenarian Giulio Andreotti, seven times prime minister since 1972, and no British party can boast an uninterrupted record in government comparable to Signor Andreotti's Christian Democrats.

The Italians, it is widely agreed, are crying out for change, not just of government, but of the entire political class. But what exactly does Italy have to learn from the British system? Can a referendum introducing first-past-the-post for 238 of the 315 seats of just one of the two chambers of the Italian parliament start the renewal process? And where, in a liberal democracy such as Italy, is an entirely new political class to be found?

The difficulty in answering these questions is that this weekend's referendum is only the first stage of the reform process. Those who wish to retain PR, especially among the smaller parties, will have plenty of opportunity to affect what follows. A referen-

dum in Italy can only abolish part or all of an existing law. It cannot substitute a new one. Even if all goes well on Sunday, nearly a quarter of the Senate seats will still be allocated on a strictly proportional basis. Likewise, the strict PR of the lower house, equal in power to the Senate, cannot for technical reasons be changed by a referendum. So legislation will still be necessary to avoid the deadlock likely if the two houses are selected on entirely different bases.

If the vote for reform is at all ambiguous, it will give comfort to those who want to keep PR. Others, looking to the bi-polarity they think is produced in France by the second ballot, want to legislate for this system for both houses. The arguments that will follow the referendum could therefore still block real reform, or delay it until after the next election, which, with well over 100 MPs in the current parliament under investigation for corruption, cannot be delayed.

Even with first-past-the-post or a second ballot, the political effect is hard to predict. The largest party may win only just over 20 per cent of votes, and most others considerably less. So it is possible that several parties will still get back into parliament after the next election. The Northern League should get the reform vote in the

simplify the party constellation into a broadly bi-polar battle.

At the very least, there would be only a partial turnover of the political class. If a significant element of PR is maintained, the smaller parties could still hold the balance in government. The north would certainly be represented by a new political party, though its representatives are an unknown quantity. Not long ago, the Northern League had a distinctively racist message on immigrants and southerners, and although this has now been toned down, other parties may still not wish to work with it.

As for the PDS, it would be ironic if "renewal" in Italy turned out to mean the arrival in government of a party which had only recently changed its name from the Communist party. While nowhere near as tainted as the Christian Democrats and their Socialist allies, the PDS has also been involved in some of the recent scandals, and hardly sells as new wine, despite the new bottle.

For hopes of renewal in the Christian Democrats, first-past-the-post could turn out to be a sick joke. The party is likely to do best in the south and in Sicily, but here individual candidates will fight highly personal campaigns. Their support — money, contacts, party workers —

may well come from very dubious sources, not least organised crime. Efforts to clean up the party and make it more "northern" could be undermined at a stroke.

For other parties, it is true, single-member, simple plurality or second-ballot arrangements would allow voters, rather than reluctant party managers, to throw out the most corrupt. In this sense, there might be a replacement of individuals, if not of parties. But renewal also means a renewal of parliamentary behaviour, and here too, the effects of electoral reform may be mercurial. Many of Italy's past political ills have stemmed from parliamentary indiscipline. If voters — those in the south at least — think that they are choosing "constituency-orientated" men and women, rather than party programmes, they will not punish backbench indiscipline at a subsequent election. So achieving discipline as well as the parliamentary majority necessary to cut budget deficits, privatised the state sector and improve public services, may thus prove impossible.

As many shrewd Italians fear, therefore, Sunday's referendum, though a necessary first step, will be only the beginning. The effects of an electoral system in one country are not automatically reproduced in another country that adopts it, for history, social divisions and voter psychology differ. Voters and MPs have to learn new habits. Only then will renewal be certain to go beyond a change of faces and perhaps of party labels to the behavioural renewal that really counts.

David Hine is a fellow of Christ Church, Oxford and the author of *Governing Italy* (OUP, £13.95).

They die so that we feel better

The West's pointless intervention in Beirut should be remembered by those now urging action against the Serbs

History is a bad tutor, but sometimes nothing else will do. Where else to turn when Hitler, Holocaust and appeasement are in the air, when Gallup declares that two-thirds of Britons want to go to war in Bosnia, when heartrending pictures drive us from the house of reason up into the hills of hysteria?

The date that we should remember this weekend is September 18, 1932. The place is Beirut. The seven-year-old civil war has escalated, with weapons pouring in on all sides. The killing fields are level. An Israeli army has invaded the country to secure peace and had failed. An American-led force has helped send the PLO leadership into exile, but militias, tribes, villages, families remain at each other's throats.

That September day, an appalling massacre occurred in the Sabra and Chatila camps in Beirut, packed with Palestinian refugees from the fighting. Whole families were dragged from their homes and butchered in the streets. To this day, nobody knows how many died, possibly more than a thousand.

The world did not stand idly by. President Reagan decided upon what an adviser later called "an emotional response to a tragic event". Within ten days, American marines landed, followed by a peacekeeping force of French and Italians. It was the third time since decolonisation that foreign troops had landed in Beirut. A 115-strong British contingent arrived in December. Their objective was to "keep the peace" while talks between the warring factions took place.

The reaction in Beirut was euphoric. Nobody had to compromise any more. Everybody could misbehave. No peace was kept. No productive talks took place. Fighting continued. The Americans and British troops and began shelling Choue villages from the USS New Jersey offshore. Peace-

keeping became self-defence and then murderous aggression. The Americans suffered terrible reprisals, including a car bomb that killed 250 marines. This broke their spirit.

The adventure lasted a year. On February 8, 1984, British troops left. The foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, declared that they "could no longer fulfil their peacekeeping role in such dangerous conditions". The Americans departed on February 26, admitting "it hasn't worked". The war reverted to the status quo ante, and its horrors dropped from the headlines. Never was outside intervention more fruitless. It postponed the resolution of local rivalries requiring to end any civil war. The West's conscience was briefly eased, but at a terrible cost in lives.

There followed another six years of conflict, until Lebanon's factions finally exhausted themselves. Today, at last, peace has returned to Beirut.

Lebanon is not Bosnia. But Western reaction to Bosnia is beginning to resemble Western reaction to Lebanon. We must do something to stop the killing. We cannot stand idly by. We are part of the most powerful alliance in the world, with the biggest weapons, the best bombers, the moral sanction of the United Nations. We can do anything. Yet we are becoming, in Baroness Thatcher's phrase, "accomplices to a massacre". Let us declare who is wrong and go to war.

Even if there were a feasible military objective in Bosnia — perhaps the fortification of Sarajevo as a "UN protectorate" — I cannot see a political one. Muslims and Christians will one day have to make their own peace in Sarajevo, as in Beirut. Overly arming the Muslims would merely encourage the East to give yet more weapons to the Serbs. I do not believe either Russia or the West means to risk the tragic escalation that followed Sarajevo 1914. But



Beirut in 1982: Western forces could not impose peace. Must the UN face the same horrors in Bosnia?

what lunacy is not possible when President Clinton, Paddy Ashdown and Lady Thatcher want to shake their fists at Slav revanchism across the mountains of Bosnia?

Some interventionists still claim air power alone can halt the Serb advance. This is irresponsible. To imply that bombers, the most overrated weapons of limited war, will do anything but cause embarrassment is absurd. Bombing has no more relevance here than it had in South Vietnam or Beirut, or indeed in the attempts to topple Gaddafi or Saddam.

All military intelligence rejects bombing as wholly ineffective in this theatre. Either those who preach armed intervention are hypocrites, or they really mean to commit ground troops. Nothing is more odious than to attack governments for doing nothing and then add "but I am against sending troops".

Hindsight in war is senseless. Policy must address the now, not the then. One thing in Bosnia is certain: a change in the status of the United

Nations to that of combatant would kill more people. It would instantly bring an end to the humanitarian convulsions. Serbia would regard all UN activity as hostile, and would retaliate accordingly. Britain and the West would be associated with any anti-Serb atrocities — of which there would be plenty — in the revitalised civil war. Ground troops would be vulnerable to guerrilla attack. Sooner or later their political masters would tire of the killing, the inconclusiveness, the shame. As in Beirut, they would retreat, their objective unattained. Whatever territory had been secured from the Serbs would revert to its previous insecurity.

I do not believe the British troops in Bosnia at present are presiding over a massacre or a UN humiliation. The maxim that charity should never carry a gun is a sound one and served the aid agencies well in Ethiopia. The Cheshires and the Royal Engineers took a huge risk in escorting the convoys, but they have fulfilled their remit immaculately. They have helped relieve the casualties of war without becoming parties to it. They have

been neither participants nor referees. They have been the first aid tent. Wars end when one side is beaten. Most of the killing takes place between the moment when defeat is certain and the moment when the defeated accept it. Outside intervention usually prolongs that killing gap, as I fear is the case in Srebrenica. As in Beirut, outside peacekeepers offer the defeated a brief reprieve from reality. They also enrage the impending victor. Lady Thatcher should know this. She was enraged by Mr Reagan's peacemaking attempts as she approached her Falklands victory.

The Muslims are not going to win this ghastly war. It is irresponsible for the outside world to help prolong it, however grotesque the Serbs' behaviour. There is a role for intervention, but it is a difficult, unspectacular one: the provision, wherever possible, of humanitarian relief. That worthwhile task is now being sacrificed in a mad stampede to military action. We all want somebody else to die to show how much we care. This is obscene. After ten years, nothing is remembered, nothing learnt.

Burrowing Nimby

SWEET revenge for Tories railing against the government over its plan to take the Channel tunnel link through their leafy Kent constituencies. Labour's Tony Banks, who has been championing the current route through east London, has just discovered an awful truth: British Rail is planning to tunnel directly under his house.

A detailed map of the route through his Newham North West constituency arrived on his desk in the House of Commons this week with an anonymous message: "Is there anything personal in this?" Banks says British Rail is inch perfect. "They've got it spot on. The link looks like it is going straight through my living room on the map," he says. "I'd laugh if it weren't my own house."

But BR says it's not so much through, as under. Banks, it says, should have no fear for his china, as high-speed trains hasten to King's Cross or St Pancras 75 ft beneath his Victorian home. "With modern techniques, we are not plan-

ning for houses to fall down as we tunnel underneath them," says John Bennett, a spokesman. "But we will conduct a survey of any house before we go underneath it — in case cracks appear later."

Though far from reassured, Banks will set aside personal interests for the sake of his constituents. But British Rail may yet grant him a reprieve. "Although we have a map, there are still geological factors to consider, and the route may yet change," says Bennett. "We've got nothing personal against Tony Banks."

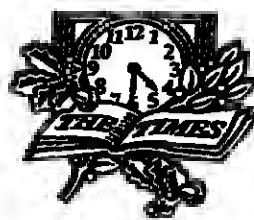
Race almost run?

MATTHEW PARRIS, *The Times's* celebrated parliamentary sketchwriter, is the first to admit that his Westminster career was a little short on historic moments. So it's not surprising that he's spending an anxious weekend wondering whether his most enduring achievement, the fastest MP's time in the London Marathon, is under threat.

The challenge in tomor-

row's race comes, of course, from double Olympic gold medalist Seb Coe. Tony MP for Falmouth and Camborne. Parris, who clocked the hugely impressive time of two hours 32 minutes 57 seconds in 1985, the year before he resigned his seat, is inconsolable at the prospect of losing his record. "It's all I have got," he wails. "Seb Coe has got world records and Olympic medals. He doesn't need this as well. It is the only monument to my career as an MP. I cannot bear to watch the race."

● Sweet smiles at the headquarters of Nutsweet, the London marathon's sponsor,



DIARY

yesterday, even though the pre-race headlines were dominated by Mars, sponsor of the marathon from 1984 to 1988. Mars, of course, was revelling in all the free publicity that surrounded the rescue of the British climbers, who survived four days in the Russian mountains on a diet of the chocolate bar. "We're not bitter," said a Nutsweet spokesman — just a little artificially?

Not a word

COULD it be that those office luxuries are simply too tempting to let on? Surely Andrew Tyrie, Norman Lamont's erstwhile political adviser, could have told him about the state of play at the notorious European Bank for Reconstruction and Development?

position to inform Lamont of the marbled splendour at the bank's London headquarters. The wizard economist and former Tony candidate moved from the Treasury to the bank last year, and is now employed as its expert on Macedonia and Croatia. But when asked yesterday if he felt compromised by Lamont's sudden interest in the bank, he displayed a mastery economy with words: "I have not got anything to say. I really haven't got any comment." Probably had a private plane to catch.

● It's not only Labour MPs who are backing Baroness Thatcher's call to arms. On Radio 4's Any Questions? as far back as December, *Glenys Kinnock* was singing a similar tune. Questioned about Bosnia, Mrs Kinnock said: "I feel we need to have military inter-

vention. I think we need to deal with the heavy artillery which is above Sarajevo and we need to have air attacks to stop what is happening..."

Romeward bound?

WHEN Ann Widdecombe finally sets off on the path to Rome next week, John Gummer may not be far behind. The agriculture minister has decided not only to attend the service at which Widdecombe will be received into the Roman Catholic church, but to take an active role as well.

Leading Roman Catholic MPs John Patten and David Alton will sponsor Widdecombe. John Gummer, who resigned from the Synod over the issue of women priests, will read the lesson in St Stephen's Crypt at the Commons — heightening speculation he will soon announce his own departure from the Anglican church.

Playful memories

THE ACTOR Alastair Sim, best known as the cross-dressing principal of St Trinian's, is to be commemorated in his native Edinburgh by Sir Ian



McKellen. The theatrical knight knighted Sim in Ronald Mavor's play, *A Private Matter* at the Lyceum Theatre in 1973.

McKellen first proposed the idea of marking Sim's birthplace two years ago, while playing *Richard III* in Edinburgh. On April 29, he will unveil a plaque on Film House, just a few yards from where Sim was born.

A FLYING start to the cricket season for John Morris, who scored the first century of the year for Derbyshire against Cambridge University on Wednesday. But it has been suggested that his form was inspired by an April 1 phone call from team-mates, who convinced him that David Gower had replaced Gooch as England captain.

Morris has been a friend of Gower — seen here in pre-season training — since they took to the air in Tiger Moths during an Australian tour in 1991. They infuriated officials by buzzing the ground to celebrate Robin Smith's return to form. Both men will be hoping Smith returns the compliment this season.

McKellen says: "Any actor of my generation making a list of their favourite actors would have Alastair Sim at the top."

"Apart from being a wonderful professional, he was one of life's great eccentrics. He would never give autographs, and turned down a knight-hood because he thought everyone was equal. He thought no one should have a vote over the age of 30."



TURNING POINT

From Guernica to Srebrenica: the power of a name

The electronic images of a far-off war are fleeting and quickly fade from the collective memory of a nation. Yet the Serbian siege of Muslim refugees in Srebrenica seems to have triggered a different response. Baroness Thatcher's fierce attack on Western policy in Bosnia on Tuesday night has added vigour to a listless debate. It has also focused the nation's attention on the ill fortune of a single town under bombardment. If Western politicians now choose the eleventh hour to draw up a credible Balkan strategy, historians of the future may cite the grim sufferings of Srebrenica as a turning-point.

For all its bloody ferocity, the Balkan war has failed to create sustained public interest in this country. Less than a year ago, British television cameras beamed around the world the ghastly images of the Serbian concentration camp at Omarska in northern Bosnia.

The horribly resonant sight of skeletal figures caged in barbed wire was enough to prompt western governments to send troops into the fray. But, just as quickly, the pressure for action ebbed away. British politicians still await a public mandate for military intervention.

That mandate may indeed emerge from the cruel pageantry of Srebrenica. Such traumas often prove to be defining moments in the history of a country. In 1937 the bombing of Guernica by German bombers sent to help Franco by Hitler was critical in mobilising anti-fascist opinion in western Europe. A moment of horrific revelation captured on canvas by Picasso's brush. Likewise, the Tet offensive a quarter of a century ago was the shock to American pride which ultimately forced the long and painful retreat from Vietnam. Other examples come

from other ages — from Thermopylae to Alamein.

Yet it is hazardous to romanticise history into a plotline of sentimental "turning-points". On this issue, the different historiographical schools of the 20th century are united. The great Fernand Braudel's study of deep historical structures — history of *la longue durée* — urged historians away from study of discreet historical events, while the contemporary revisionist school has doubted the power of emotional reaction to overcome self-interest. A revisionist studying the current Balkan crisis would be less interested in the impact of Srebrenica's plight on the British public than in the likelihood that other Conservative politicians will dare to follow Lady Thatcher's rebellion against her successor's foreign policy.

The moments in war that generate public support are not always those that win them. The "dambusters" raid on three Ruhr dams half a century ago boosted morale but in its anniversary year it is under fierce fire from historians as strategic nonsense. Few Britons today recall the great victories of the battle of the Atlantic which safeguarded the Allied convoys. Yet its military significance far outstripped that of the dambusting Operation Chastise.

A bloody siege can focus and electrify the emotions. But most of history's true turning-points are less extravagant and take place in quiet rooms in chancelleries. A survivor of the Warsaw ghetto noted yesterday that the horrors of Srebrenica merely revealed that the indifference of governments to slaughter had not changed in the past 50 years. The people of Bosnia will need more than a week-long surge of compassion; it is political will, not popular sentiment, that will bring hope to their shattered land.

MAASTRICHT MANOEUVRES

The Commons should be allowed a vote on the social chapter

Not often does *The Times* find itself on the same side as Dennis Skinner, the Labour MP for Bolsover who prides himself on combining wit and insult in equal measure. But on Thursday he talked much sense. In an impassioned onslaught against the Deputy Speaker's decision not to allow a vote on the social chapter during the committee stage of the Maastricht bill, Mr Skinner pointed out that while other EC countries were being allowed referendums, the House of Commons was not even being allowed a vote, as long as the government faced defeat.

This saga will not go down as a glorious chapter in the annals of British parliamentary history. The arguments are arcane, but no less important for that. Broadly, the House was faced with two amendments on the social chapter: 27 and 75. The former presented the best chance of forcing the government either to accept the chapter or to abandon the treaty altogether. The latter simply forced a debate on the social chapter before the government transfers powers from Westminster to Brussels.

Michael Morris, the Deputy Speaker, announced two weeks ago that he would allow a vote on 75, but not on 27. Then, on Thursday, the government unexpectedly announced that it would accept amendment 75 without a vote. Still Mr Morris refused to allow a vote on 27, even though this meant that the House would have no chance at all during the committee stage of the bill to divide on the social chapter.

Uproar broke out, with Jack Cunningham, the shadow foreign secretary, speaking for many when he said that "people far beyond the confines of the Chamber will think the House of Commons has been cheated of a legitimate vote". Mr Skinner described the decision as "a stitch-up" and "a conspiracy with the government of the

day". It does seem extraordinary that, on the same issue on which the government could have been defeated at committee stage, a vote has not been allowed.

But the omission can, and should, be rectified. The bill will return to the House of Commons for its report stage, when it will be presided over by the Speaker himself, Betty Boothroyd. Amendments will then be taken at her discretion, but the rule of thumb is that matters fully debated and decided at committee stage do not come up again at report stage.

The social chapter may have been debated, but it has certainly not been decided. The Maastricht bill has spent 20 days in committee but not one vote has been taken on this issue. Even though Britain has an opt-out from the provisions of the chapter, it will still have to bear its share of the cost of the accompanying bureaucracy. British taxpayers should not be expected to accept this without their MPs being given a chance to vote on it.

Miss Boothroyd may be tempted not to call an amendment similar to 27 for fear of seeming to be undermining her deputy. In truth, she would greatly enhance the reputation of those who sit in the Speaker's chair by allowing such a vote. Any whiff of connivance between the Speaker and the government is damaging. This would give her the perfect chance to demonstrate the independence of the institution she represents.

Even if the Commons is not given a chance to vote, the House of Lords may do so. If peers passed a similar amendment, it would come back to the Commons and a vote would then have to be taken. The government has almost finessed its way through the committee stage of the Maastricht bill. But the opposition to the treaty still has high cards to play.

LIFE ON MARS

A mountain adventure ends in glory for a chocolate bar

Capitalists pondering the risks of investing in Russia should take heart this weekend. Their trail has been blazing, once again, by the ultimate endurer, the Mars bar. On the strength of three bars each, four British climbers survived five days in the Caucasus mountains, in blizzard conditions and temperatures plunging to minus 30C at night.

Motivation, physical fitness, teamwork, a lighter and Lady Luck may have contributed to the happy ending to this Russian adventure. So may the warmth from the shepherds' huts they burnt down and will doubtless now offer to replace. But when Roger Payne of the British Mountaineering Council commented on their escape with the words, "Well equipped for the trip as the party obviously were...", he can only have meant the Mars bars: apart from a litre of water each, that was all they had.

You might think that the rejoicing in the Mars marketing department would be second only to that of the men's families, but this latest episode is as naught to previous triumphs, no more than an extra chocolate triumph, no more than an extra chocolate triumph, no more than an extra chocolate triumph. The Mars bar's 61-year-old history of caramelised glories. Think back to 1981 when the *Financial Times*, provoked by the giddy spiral of sterling inflation, introduced the Mars bars standard as a "ultimate unit of consumer wealth" and a reliable way to calculate historic prices and incomes. In the high and palmy days of the early Thatcher era, a graduate at ICI could buy 41,000 Mars bars with his annual earn-

ings, 8,000 more than in the Blitz. But then, Mars bars were the forces' sweetheart in those days, distributed during sweet rationing to Naafi canisters throughout the world.

So impressive has the consistency and stability of the new coinage been since its first issue in 1932 that the government might with profit propose it in Brussels, as an ingenious compromise between the Ecu and the emerging German preference for a "Euromark". All that being "at the heart of Europe" takes is a little marketing vision. The Jockey Club, which disqualified an Ascot winner in 1987 because it had eaten a Mars bar, might object, but the Jockey Club's image these days could do with help from the wizards of Slough.

The Mars bar is no mere miracle of packaging. But the name may help: judging by the successes of Galaxy and Milky Way, there is clearly some subliminal association in British minds between chocolate and the universe. Mars has obligingly calculated that although the British eat 2.7 million bars a day, it would take them 574 years to eat the 40 million miles' worth of bars stretching between Britain and the planet.

Perhaps this week's heroes diverted themselves as they trudged to safety by calculating how many chews lay between them and Mars. But calculation seems not to have been their forte. It turns out that the famous four ate all their Mars bars on the first day. They survived the other four on snow. The Snow Marketing Board must be delighted.

Arms dilemma in Bosnian conflict

From Professor Geoffrey Lee Williams

Sir, Your judicious leader ("Taking Bosnia seriously", April 15) commends the logic of Lady Thatcher's robust suggestion (report, April 14) that the West should take action in Bosnia, but implicitly repudiates her specific proposal to arm the Muslims. You rightly prefer Lord Owen's more measured endorsement of selective military action.

The realism of Douglas Hurd should not be berated simply because it is the logical outcome of *realpolitik*. There is, indeed, as your leader says, no "lack of strategic acumen" in the case against those advocating arming the Bosnian Muslims.

Surely such a course of action would inevitably put the United States and Russia on a collision course? Crudely put, does Boris Yeltsin rooster more to the West than the fate of a phantom state?

Greater Serbia is now a fact. To put the vanquished Muslims before the wider interests of the West would be foolish in the extreme. It is therefore a vital Western interest to avoid undermining Mr Yeltsin in the forthcoming referendum.

Victory for the Russian nationalists would, almost certainly, result in open support for the Serbs, with the West and the Islamic states coming under increased pressure to arm the Muslims.

As Simon Jenkins argues ("Armchair strategists, keep clear", April 14), there is no ideological justification for military intervention — Nato or UN — beyond humanitarian help.

Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY LEE WILLIAMS,
University of Cambridge,
Centre of International Studies,
History Faculty Building,
West Road, Cambridge,
April 15.

From Mr F. Barschak

Sir, However much one may disagree with Malcolm Rifkind's views on the conflict in Bosnia, one thing he cannot be accused of is lack of clarity.

His statement (report, April 15) that arming the Bosnian Muslims would "prolong the conflict and make it even bloodier and more vicious" is unexceptionable, because the natural consequence of the exercise by victims of aggression of the right of self-defence is that, once the victim is supplied with the means thereof, considerable numbers of aggressors, rapists, ethnic cleansers and mass murderers then do die or are wounded.

The consequence of not supplying the victim with arms is that then only victims die. And when all the victims are either dead or expelled then, indeed, the war stops.

Those who deny a victim of aggression the means of self-defence, when those means are readily available and relatively inexpensive for this country, are indeed accessories to the continued slaughter of those victims, and to the defenders abroad and the justifiers at home of a policy that is sickening, heartless, needless and wrong.

Yours faithfully,
F. BARSCHAK,
107 Greenscroft Gardens,
South Hampstead, NW6,
April 15.

From the Secretary of State for Defence

Sir, In your leading article you state that I described as "emotional nonsense" Lady Thatcher's contention that Bosnia is within Europe's sphere of influence and "should be within Europe's sphere of conscience".

I made no such response. Indeed, I agree with that aspect of Lady Thatcher's remarks.

What I described as "emotional nonsense" was Lady Thatcher's accusation that the British and other Western governments were "accomplices to massacre" (report, April 14).

Yours sincerely,
MALCOLM RIFKIND,
Ministry of Defence,
Whitehall, SW1,
April 16.

From Mr Jack Arkinstall

Sir, Mr Robert Adley, Conservative MP for Christchurch, in referring to Lady Thatcher as "this former Finchley fishwife" (report, April 15), does nothing to improve the very low rating of the Tory party. You can disagree with someone without being obnoxious.

Yours sincerely,
JACK ARKINSTALL,
99 Beech Road, Selsey,
Chichester, West Sussex,
April 15.

From Mr P. C. Le Mesurier

Sir, There is something astoundingly absurd in Lady Thatcher criticising the government for its jelly-like spinelessness, its incomprehension of integrity, and its limitless capacity for appeasement. It was, after all, these very qualities in its members that caused her to prefer them in the first place.

Yours faithfully,
PETER LE MESURIER,
Winterset, The Drive,
Godalming, Surrey,
April 15.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 071-782 5000

Motor vehicles versus walking boots in the green lanes

From Mr Gwyn Thomas

Sir, A 100 hp, three-axle tractor/trailer combination weighs up to 28 tonnes. A solo trail motorcycle and rider weigh about 200 kg, and cause no more erosion to a green lane than do walking boots ("Off-road cars face legal ban on ancient country paths", April 9).

At a local footpaths' society AGM last week it was pointed out that parties of up to 60 rambblers often set out at weekends.

There is no "motorised menace" in our country (leading article, April 9). Only the prejudices and grave misconceptions which argue for exclusive rights on our ancient highways.

I use green roads on foot, hoof and wheel. I am prepared to share them with others. But if selfish walkers want reserved rights of way, let them keep to the 100,000 miles of definitive footpaths and stay away from our three-barred 15 per cent of the total network of green roads.

Yours etc,
GWYN THOMAS,
Minories, Wells Road,
Priddy, Wells, Somerset,
April 9.

From Mr Alexander C. Young

Sir, In England and Wales in excess of 125,000 miles of rough tracks are available to walkers and less than 5,000 miles for drivers. In Scotland the position is even more heavily weighted in favour of walkers: only one road (the Corryvreckan pass) of some 15 miles is a vehicular right of way.

Most off-road drivers belong to four-wheel drive clubs, and great emphasis is placed on driving without damaging the countryside. Rambblers are not "sprayed with mud" or "defeated by engines" as your leading article says because off-road runs take

place at walking speed, when engines are very quiet.

Yours faithfully,
ALEXANDER C. YOUNG
(Green Roads Officer,
Scottish Land-Rover Owners Club,
21 Corroon Road, Glasgow.)

From Mr David Leigh

Sir, I own a four-wheel drive vehicle and occasionally use green lanes, and I assure you that I am neither noisy nor damaging in my progress. Admittedly, a small minority are either ignorant of any action about damage or just couldn't care less.

Your point that such lanes are used primarily for leisure does not allow for the fact that a high proportion of tarmac roads, especially in scenic areas, are used for the same purpose.

The way forward is not through a total ban on all vehicles but through education and co-operation. For those who want to demonstrate their off-road skills there are many excellent private courses, in addition to clubs in every area.

Yours sincerely,
D. LEIGH,
Market Square, Llay,
Wrexham, Chwyd.

From Mrs J. L. Crosby

Sir, The countryside is not a great empty space available for all to use as they choose. It is the farmers' workshop and where people live, and it is an accepted principle that we work for the good of the majority even if the interests of a minority have to be restricted.

In Weardale there are currently four applications by a motor-biking organisation for the recognition of paths as byways, which would become usable by motorised vehicles. If these applications should be successful many more may follow, for this date

has many green lanes, old lead-mining routes and quarry men's paths.

It is easy to understand the view that it is best to accept the right of vehicular access and attempt to regulate the traffic. However a law is only as effective as its enforcement and effective policing is unlikely given the closure of many rural stations.

Promulgators of the ancient laws would have had only farm carts in mind. Four-wheel drive vehicles and motor bikes driven for fun could not have entered into their thinking.

Yours faithfully,
JUNE H. CROSBY,
Old School House, High Street,
Stanhope, co. Durham.

From Mrs Cecil Colyer

Sir, In the report and leading article about byways one relevant point was not mentioned. Byways may not be ploughed, whereas footpaths and bridleways may be unless they follow a field boundary such as a hedge, although they must later be restored. Thus there is an incentive to remove flanking hedges.

Trail bike-riding is a Duke of Edinburgh award scheme sport and riders observe a strict code of conduct. Traffic regulation orders can set speed limits and exclude four-wheel drive vehicles.

What is preferable for the public: a beautiful green lane with its flowers and wildlife habitat and an occasional party of trail riders, a pony trap, or even four-wheel drive vehicles, or a cultivated field?

Yours faithfully,
R. COLYER
(President, Common Land Cause
(The Countryside Society),
Orchardene, Candys Lane,
Shillingstone,
Blandford Forum, Dorset.

Challenge for the religious to focus on God's reality

From the Rector of Ashted

Sir, From a self-confessed agnostic came the most compelling Easter message I have heard this year. Thank you Matthew Parris (article, April 12) for your succinct synopsis of the Christian gospel, and your incisive challenge to the Church, especially the Church of England.

Preoccupation with the status of women, forms of worship, new-found interest in morality, clerical gear, establishment and the rest is rearranging the furniture in a house which is less and less lived in, if not actually on fire.

These issues are only of interest to residents. How many optional church leaders proclaimed to non-residents the heart of the Easter message that the God of the New Testament does exist, Jesus Christ is alive?

I believe, Matthew Parris would indeed drop his job, sell his house, throw away his possessions, leave his acquaintances and set out into the world burning with the desire to know more, and when he had found out more, to act upon it and tell others if Easter were true.

The first Easter constrained hundreds to do just that because they discovered that God was real. That is what changed the world, not secondary stuff about the Church.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER HUGHES,
The Rectory, Dene Road,
Ashted, Surrey,
April 13.

Slang origin

From Mr Brian Jewell

Sir, Your obituary (April 10) of Bobby Mitchell, the outstanding left-winger for Newcastle United in the 1950s, states that "the phrase 'Bobby Dazzler' was coined to admire his talents".

Not so. The expression "bobby dazzler" was in common use in the North East long before Bobby Mitchell's time. Dictionaries of slang give its date of origin as c.1890, perhaps derived from "bloody dazzler".

On the other hand some Georgians believe it stems from "bobby", meaning a shilling, and the conspicuous splendour of an object so highly priced.

Yours etc,
BRIAN JEWELL,
Broadwater House,
30 Park Parade,
Harrogate, North Yorkshire,
April 13.

Musical fame

From Mr Michael Pipe

Sir, Richard Morrison's article (March 30) on the success of Henryk Gorecki and the apparent neglect of other lesser known composers raises the whole question of what differentiates an unfamiliar composer from one who is known, yet whose music remains essentially unknown.

A prime example of the latter would be George Frideric Handel, whose music everybody thinks they know but in practice is limited to a very small proportion of a large output which only now is being explored and recorded for the first time.

There are more than a dozen more oratorios which deserve performances on a similar frequency to *Messiah*. It seems it is the old story of "better the devil you know".

From Mrs Anthony O. R. Mitchell

Sir, I always enjoy and respect Matthew Parris's opinions as a columnist, but how sad I feel on reading his article. Is it necessary for everything in life to be validated? Is there no room in his thinking for belief based on trust, for the inexplicable, for things beyond understanding?

Yours sincerely,
JANET L. MITCHELL,
Tompetts Bank House,
Forest Row, Sussex,
April 13.

From Rabbi Dr Sidney Brichito

Sir, Matthew Parris's dilemma about the existence of God reminds me of my days in the mid-1950s as a rabbinic student in New York City.

Dr Henry Slonimsky, the dean emeritus, bellowed at his classes: "Boys, nobody believes in God; you are selling stock in trade which disappeared 300 years ago." He would then add cryptically: "God is at the end of history, not at its beginning, but you cannot preach it!"

Twenty years later, on the Jewish new year and in a Liberal synagogue in Ealing, I did preach that hardly anyone in my congregation believed in God. Only one congregant questioned my proposition.

Ironically, had I dared to alter a traditional tune of one of the popular Hebrew hymns, there would have been a great outcry.

The answer to Mr Parris's question,

Holiday road toll

From Mr N. J. Tipple

Sir, Over the last few years a new media ritual has emerged at the end of a bank holiday: the reporting of the grisly record of accidental deaths which have occurred over the period.

On April 13 a headline refers to 21 road deaths as being "carnage" (despite the fact that with a daily average of 11.7 deaths, 21 is well below the norm for a four-day period and should therefore be regarded with some relief).

Why is there this macabre fascination for such coverage? Is it merely that being a bank holiday, there is not a great deal to report? I find this practice deeply distasteful.

Yours faithfully,
N. J. TIPPLE,
Ashley Manor Lodge, Ashley,
Kings Somborne, Hampshire,
April 13.

To a certain extent, we are still in the grip of the cult of the repertoire established during the last century, in which certain composers (invariably Austro-German) are deemed to have dictated the course of musical development.

The result is that in writing about Cherubini, John McMurray describes his *Coronation Mass* as having "an extraordinary... Beethoven-like ruggedness".

If Cherubini's operas of the 1790s were better known, it would be seen that in fact it is Beethoven who strove to emulate Cherubini, whom he acknowledged as his favourite composer.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL PIPE,
27 Ardmore Road,
Hither Green, SE13,
April 5.

"Why do people debate the future of the Church when they have not made up their minds about the existence of God?" is simple. It is easier to deal with the periphery than the basics.

As Mr Parris says: "And if God does not exist then surely the Church falls apart." Sadly, most of us in the "religious" business seek to maintain the protective fences around our institutions to prevent us from acknowledging that their foundations are crumbling.

Human beings have the weakness of going everywhere but to the heart of the matter, which in this instance is God.

Faithfully,
SIDNEY BRICHITO
(Senior Vice-President, Union of Liberal & Progressive Synagogues,
The Montagu Centre,
12-14 Clippstone Street, W1,
April 13.

From Mr Bernard Driver

Sir, Matthew Parris enquires whether we would pay into a pension fund if the insurance company were a fiction.

Of course not if we knew it to be a fiction. But it would be a different matter if its existence were possible, if it had been persuasively advertised, and if the promised reward vastly exceeded the premium.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD DRIVER,
Poplars Farm Cottage,
Curridge, Hampshire.

Women's pensions

From Mrs Eithne H. Lewis

Sir, As a married woman in my fifties, who stayed at home to bring up a family and therefore have only a few years of stamps towards a pension at whatever age, while agreeing that the state of marriage has changed (Mr Latters' letter, April 12), I resent the suggestion that I should not have a state pension on the strength of my husband's stamps and have to rely on income support.

Over the 23 years we have been married I have saved the state a great deal of money by having my career "at home", as is regularly calculated by those who know.

I do agree, though, with Mrs Borchers's letter (also April 12) that those of us in our fifties should have an interim arrangement if women's pensionable age is raised to 65, as it is now far too late to make other arrangements for those extra five years we will have to wait.

Yours faithfully,
EITHNE H. LEWIS,
St Mary's House,
2a New Market Street,
Buxton, Derbyshire,
April 12.

Weekend Money letters, page 28

Beyond the buffers

From Mr A. G. Iafate

Sir, Surely we must be coming out of recession — the unions are coming out on strike!

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY G. IAFATE,
Canterbury Tales,
Pilgrims Way,
Reigate, Surrey,
April 13.

COURT CIRCULAR

WINDSOR CASTLE

April 16: By Command of The Queen, Viscount Long (Lord in Waiting) was present at Heathrow Airport, London, this morning upon the departure of the President of the Republic of Lithuania and bade farewell to His Excellency on Her Majesty's behalf.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

April 16: The Prince Edward this evening arrived at Heathrow Airport, London, from New York. Lieutenant Colonel Sean O'Dwyer was in attendance.

ST JAMES'S PALACE

April 16: The Prince of Wales, Patron, British Deer Society, today attended the Stalker's Day, during the Annual General Meeting, at Blair Atholl.

KENSINGTON PALACE

April 16: The Princess of Wales, Patron, Turning Point, this morning visited Hammersmith and Fulham Druggists, at 153 Hammersmith Road, London W14.

Mr Patrick Jephson was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE

April 16: Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, was represented by the Lady Barnard at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of the Dowager Lady Barnard at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Staindrop, Durham, today.

YORK HOUSE

ST JAMES'S PALACE
April 16: The Duke of Kent, Chairman, Trustees of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Youth Trust Conference (United Kingdom Fund), this morning attended the Annual Trustees Meeting at the Industrial Society, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1.

KENSINGTON PALACE

Commander Richard Aylard RN, was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE

April 16: The Princess of Wales, Patron, Turning Point, this morning visited Hammersmith and Fulham Druggists, at 153 Hammersmith Road, London W14.



Artistic move: Dr Gerald Moore, on the steps of the Sussex country house he is selling after 30 years. Dr Moore, who began his career as a child star acting opposite Sir John Mills and Peta Clark and later qualified in medicine and dentistry at Guy's, will use some of the money from the sale to set up an art centre in North Devon. He is selling Heathfield Park, a grade two listed building and its 160-acre estate for an estimated £850,000. The house has many

historical connections and was the home of General Elliott, who was later made Lord Heathfield in recognition of his defence of Gibraltar in 1779-82. The grounds were painted by Turner. The house contents will be auctioned by Sotheby's on the premises for an estimated £300,000 on May 19. Dr Moore, who bought Heathfield Park in 1963, has always been a keen painter and shared an exhibition with David Hockney in 1961. He has started a charity to

a 19th century Gothic-revival church in central Barnstaple, and hopes it will become an art centre for North Devon where he now lives. He said yesterday: "If the sale goes well and I'm left with enough money I intend to make a very sizable downy to North Devon. It would consist of cash and pictures by British and Australian artists I knew in the 1950s. There is also sculpture by Sir Charles Wheeler, the former president of the Royal Academy."

Birthdays

Today
Mr Lindsay Anderson, film and theatre director, 70; Mrs Sirinaw Bandanaike, former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, 77; Mr Chris Barber, jazz musician, 63; Mr John Burt Foster, tennis commentator, 62; Miss Joan Clague, former director of nursing services, Marie Curie Memorial Foundation, 62; Miss Ruth Etchells, former principal, St John's College, Durham, 62; Miss Clare Francis, novelist and former yachtswoman, 47; Mrs Anne Harris, former national chairman, National Federation of Women's Institutes, 68; Mr James Las, band leader, 64; Viscount Maresfield, 71; Mr Ricardo Patrice, racing driver, 39; Mrs Dora Saint (Miss Read), writer, 80; Mr Christopher Spoorberg, a vice-chairman, Hammers, 54; Mrs Ellen Stammers-Smith, former headmistress, Malvern Girls' College, 64; Mr Michael Vernon, former chairman, Spillers, 75; Vincent Wigglesworth, entomologist, 94; the Right Rev J. Yates, Bishop of Lambeth, 68.

Tomorrow

Dr C. Booth, vice-chancellor, Oxford Brookes University, 50; Sir Walter Clegg, former MP, 73; Sir Roger de Grey, president, Royal Academy, 75; Mr Alan Cleave, former chairman, Scottish Tourist Board, 60; the Marquess of Donegal, 77; Miss Sylvia Fuller, soprano, 83; Mr Brian Filler, commandant, Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh, 57; Mr David Gee, former director, Friends of the Earth, 46; Sir Peter Hornby, MP, 64; Mr Peter Jeffrey, actor, 64; Lord Mason of Barnard, 69; Miss Hayley Mills, actress, 47; the Rev Dominic Wilentz, OSB, former headmaster, Ampleforth College, 61; Baroness Paul of Wiltshire, 70; the Right Rev Dr E.J.K. Roberts, former Bishop of Ely, 83; Sir Tudy Taylor, MP, 56; Sir Edgar Ursworth, former Chief Justice of Gibraltar, 87.

Royal weddings

TOMORROW:
The Princess Royal, as Patron of the Scottish Rugby Union, will attend the rugby world cup semi-final at Murrayfield at 11.00.

School news

Charterhouse
The Cricket Quarter starts tomorrow. B.J. Alder is Head of School and L.J. Webb Captain of Cricket. Exeat will be from Saturday, May 29, to Wednesday, June 2. The Quarter ends on Saturday, July 3, which is also Old Carthusian Day. A luncheon concert will be given by the Spring Orchestra at St Martin-in-the-Fields on Monday, April 26. A Reunion will be held at the School on Saturday, October 16, for those in the School during Long Quarter 1969 and who left in or before Oration Quarter 1976. (Details from the Recorder).

Queen Margaret's School, York

The Summer Term at Queen Margaret's School, York, will begin on Thursday, April 22, and end on Saturday, July 3. Leave-out will be from Friday, May 7, to Sunday, May 9, and Half-term from Friday, May 28, to Thursday, June 3. Dr Geoffrey Chapman succeeded Mr Colin McGarrigle as headmaster in January. Amanda Gill continues as Head Girl; Jennifer Riley is Captain of Tennis. Sir Kenneth Leaver will deliver a public lecture entitled "Right and Wrong in the Greek World" on Thursday, June 10, and Professor Jasper Griffin will be guest speaker at Speech Day on Saturday, July 3.

Memorial Mass

The Count of Barcelona
Doña de Aza attended a memorial Mass for Don Juan de Borja y Borja, Count of Barcelona, celebrated by Father Joseph Gabiola yesterday at St James's, Spanish Place. Mr F.A. Miles and Father Jean-Marie Charles-Roux were robed and in the Sanctuary.

Reception

HM Government
Sir Hector Monro, Minister for Sport at the Scottish Office, will host last night at a reception held in Edinburgh Castle to mark the 1993 Rugby Football World Cup Sevens.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr P.M. Adams

and Miss J.J. Boulby
The engagement is announced between Paul Martin, son of the late Mr Raymond Adams and of Mrs Adams, of The Park, Nottingham, and Joanna Jane, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Boulby, of Ossington, Newark, Nottinghamshire.

Mr M.C. Emmott

and Miss A.J. Wiley
The engagement is announced between Matthew, son of Dr and Mrs R.A. Emmott, of Bighouse, West Yorkshire, and Alice, daughter of the late Major J.H. Wiley and Mrs D.A. Wiley, of Lincoln.

Mr A.P.H. Hadley

and Miss A.L. Parker
The engagement is announced between Andrew, younger son of Mr and Mrs Peter Hadley, of Coverack, Cornwall, and Anna, daughter of the late Mr J. Parker and of Mrs Parker, of Maldon, Essex.

Mr T.J.S. Hall

and Miss K.D. Kenny
The engagement is announced between Timothy, younger son of Mrs Aubrey Hall and the late Mr Aubrey Hall, of Bighouse, West Yorkshire, and Kim Diana, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Kenny, of West Wickham, Kent.

Lord Hawke

and Miss B.M. James
The engagement is announced between Edward, son of the late Lord Hawke and of Lady Hawke, and Brown, daughter of Mr W.T. James, BVMSc, MRCVS, and Mrs James.

Mr A.C. Jones

and Miss M.G. McGarrigle
The engagement is announced between Andrew, son of Mr and Mrs C.W. Jones, of Uxbridge, and Maria, daughter of Dr and Mrs A.L. McGarrigle, of Clontarf, Dublin.

Mr K.K. Blecker

and Miss M. Trevelyan-Clark
The engagement is announced between Kevin, elder son of the late Mr V. Blecker, and of Mrs S. Blecker, of Denver, Colorado, USA, and Marguerita, daughter of the late Major D.W. Trevelyan-Clark, and of Mrs U. Trevelyan-Clark, of Tetbury, Gloucestershire.

Mr C.P. Carter Keall

and Miss K.M.E. Bentley
The engagement is announced between Christopher, son of Mr Philip Keall, of Bristington, Bristol, and Mrs John Carter, of Broom, Bristol, and Karla, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Peter Bentley, of Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire.

Mr D.S. Kenyon

and Dr J.A.M. Cook
The engagement is announced between David, elder son of Mr Roger Kenyon, BEM, and Mrs Kenyon, of West Wittering, West Sussex, and Jennifer, daughter of Dr and Mrs David Cook, of Broadstairs, Kent.

Mr F.C. Siff

and Miss H.E. Mirrielees
The engagement is announced between Francis, only son of Mrs Peter Reinheimer, of Sarasota, Florida, and the late Mr R.T. Siff, and Hillary, only daughter of Mr James F. Mirrielees, of River Hills, Wisconsin, and Mrs Douglas Beers, of the Dominican Republic.

The marriage will take place in Florida in October.

Flight Lieutenant A.J. Whalley and Miss C.J. Rowe

The engagement is announced between James, son of the late Mr Alan Whalley and Mrs Patricia Whalley, of Melbourne, Australia, and Charlotte, only daughter of Mr Graham Rowe and Mrs Jill Cary, of Chelsea, London.

Church services tomorrow

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

GLoucester Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

Lincoln Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

Nottingham Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

Southampton Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Albans Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Andrew's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Asaph Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St David's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Denys' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Dunstons Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Edmund's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St George's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Giles' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St James' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Mary's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Michael's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Nicholas' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Peter's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Paul's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Raphael's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Richard's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Saviour's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Stephen's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Thomas' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Vincent's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Wilfrid's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Winifred's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Zeno's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Andrew's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Basil's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Benedict's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Boniface's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Brigid's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Cuthbert's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St David's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Deiniol's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Eborac Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Etheldreda's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Eustachius' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Fagwael's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Gildard's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Grigori's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Guthlac's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Hilda's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Ivo's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St James' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Baptist's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Evangelist's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Virgin's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Worker's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Baptist's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Evangelist's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

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St John the Worker's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Baptist's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

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St John the Virgin's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Worker's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John the Baptist's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

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St Giles' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St James' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St John's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Mary's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Michael's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Nicholas' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Peter's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Paul's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Raphael's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Richard's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Saviour's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Stephen's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Thomas' Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong. 5.15 PM. Evensong.

St Vincent's Cathedral: 8.30 AM. Holy Communion. 10.30 AM. Evensong.

OBITUARIES

LESLIE CHARTERIS

Leslie Charteris, creator of *The Saint*, died on April 15 aged 85. He was born in Singapore on May 12, 1907.

LESLIE CHARTERIS was one of the world's most popular thriller writers. Later generations may have known the Saint mainly from television, but for anybody who grew up in the 1930s the original stories are powerfully nostalgic. They were translated into 15 languages, constantly reprinted in cheap editions and made into a number of indifferent films. Even in retrospect their success is not hard to understand. Charteris gave his fast-roving plots a light veneer of sophisticated literary elegance and humour, which, although it soon attracted imitators, distinguished him sharply from his more leaden contemporaries. Subsequently, however, the Saint passed through a curious variety of transformations. In 1992, twenty years after publication of the last authentic Saint novel and fifty years after the peak of the author's productivity, the Crime Writers' Association gave Leslie Charteris its Diamond Dagger Award for a lifetime's achievement.

Leslie Charles Bowyer Yin was born in Singapore. His father, Dr S. C. Yin, was a Chinese surgeon, a descendant of the Shang emperors; his mother was English. Although Chinese and Malay were his first languages, he was brought up on authors such as Rider Haggard, Conan Doyle and E. W. Hornung and was particularly fond of the pirate stories in *Chums*. When he was ten, he tried his hand at writing and illustrating a magazine of his own. He was sent to England at the age of 12, to preparatory school and then to Rossall, which he did not much enjoy. He went on to King's College, Cambridge, but came down after a single year, because, as he put it, "I figured I'd been educated enough" and had decided to become a writer. His father, who wanted him to be a lawyer, was furious. They were afterwards reconciled by letter but never met again.

Deprived of parental support, he took an exotic range of temporary jobs, which included gold mining and pearl fishing in Malaya and spells in Britain as a bartender, professional bridge-player and auxil-



iary policeman. He changed his name by deed-poll to Leslie Charles Charteris Bowyer-Yin, the Charteris being borrowed from Colonel Francis Charteris, an 18th-century gambler, duellist and founder-member of the Hellfire Club.

His first book, *X Esquire*, about a fiendish plot to destroy Britain with poisoned cigarettes, was published in 1927. He followed it with several other quite lively but unremarkable thrillers. His third novel, *Meet the Tiger*, in 1928, featured a debonair hero called Simon Templar, known from his initials as the Saint. It made no special impact, but when, the following year, Charteris began writ-

ing for a new twopenny weekly, called *The Thriller*, this was the character which struck Monty Hayward, the brilliant controlling editor of boys papers for the Amalgamated Press, as worth developing.

At around the same time Charteris moved his books to Hodder and Stoughton, which, with Edgar Wallace, E. Phillips Oppenheim and Sapper on their list, were then the leading publisher of thrillers. The Saint was relaunching with a tremendous fanfare of publicity. Seven hardback volumes, containing stories which had originated in *The Thriller*, were published within the next two years. The haloed "sign of the Saint"

was derived from the stick-man figures with which Charteris had illustrated his boyhood magazine. The now fully developed character embodied poignant contradictions which sprang perhaps from Charteris's own peculiar background — English but not quite English, ruthless but very polite, a gentleman but never a duellist hero in the Drummond and Hannay mould. Among the best and most typical examples from that vintage period are *The Last Hero* (1930), *Getaway* (1932), *The Saint in New York* (1935) and *Prelude for War* (1938). The only non-Saint book was a translation, *Juan Belmonte, Killer of Bulls: The Autobiography of a Maudor*, in 1937.

Charteris himself spent much of the 1930s in either Hollywood or Florida and, in 1946, became a naturalised American citizen, although he returned eventually to live in England. He wrote comic strips and radio scripts and mixed socially with the Hollywood film community. "We had fun," he said, "and the money was good." He worked on a number of films, including not only some of the Saint series but *Lady on a Train*, with Deanna Durbin, and *Tarzan and the Huntress*.

Being in America when the war broke out, he stayed, and took the Saint across the Atlantic as well. *The Saint in Miami* (1941) is an anti-Nazi thriller; by implication, a plea for America to join the war. After Pearl Harbor he deliberately sobered the Saint down, because he thought the old swashbuckling style no longer appropriate. Instead the Saint became a semi-official counter-spy, and, after the war, an amateur detective drifting around the glamorous spots of the world, more anxious now to help friends in distress than to lift hoodlums from the ungdy. "The Saint has matured," said Charteris, "like me. He's become respectable."

He wrote a monthly short story for *The Saint Mystery Magazine*, and published collections of these instead of new novels; they were never as good as the full-length books but they kept the market turning over. He founded the Saint Club, which raises money for a children's hospital, and then for a youth club, in the East End of London.

Louis Hayward, was the first and most accurate screen representation: later films, with George Sanders, became indistinguishable from routine private eye thrillers. There were three television series: in the 1960s starring Roger Moore, in the 1970s starring Ian Ogilvy and in the 1980s starring Simon Dutton. Charteris quite liked the first two series: the producers of the third failed to consult him, though they were pledged to do so. Some of the better scripts were "novelised" ostensibly by Leslie Charteris but actually and admittedly by other hands. Charteris did, however, supervise these hybrids carefully, arguing that popular characters were frequently revived after their creator's death, and, by allowing it to be done while he was still present, he could at least ensure that the *ersatz* version stayed reasonably faithful to the original. "For an old Saint fan," sighed one critic, "reading it is like chewing plastic." The last book written by Charteris himself was *The Saint in Pursuit* (1971), with a plot adapted from one of his comic strips.

Many people, he would acknowledge, thought that the 1930s had been the Saint's best period. They were right. Those early tales had a gaiety and a gusto which no one else quite matched. They contained plenty of violence but of a cheerful kind ("Saturday night is bath night, brother," says the Saint as he knocks a villain from a bridge into the river) but with no hint of sadism or squalor: nor was there any sex beyond an occasional, and purely formal, romantic interest. They were appreciated by schoolboys but well enough written to be enjoyed by intelligent adults. These standards at least were scrupulously maintained throughout the later years when the fashion in thriller writing had changed. He addressed himself, he said, "to upright citizens with furtive dreams."

He was married four times: to Pauline Schiskin, who bore him a daughter, and from whom he was divorced in 1937; to Barbara Meyer, from whom he was divorced in 1941; to Elizabeth Bryant Borst, from whom he was divorced in 1951; and, in 1952, to Audrey Long, a former actress, who cared devotedly for him and for the Saint.

SYLVAIN FLOIRAT

Sylvain Floirat, one of France's most celebrated industrialists, died on March 14 aged 93, at Nalliac in the Dordogne, where he was born on December 28, 1899.



Sylvain Floirat was the personification of the shrewd French country boy who goes to the capital, outwits the sophisticated Parisians and amasses a fortune.

During his long career he ran airlines, headed Breguet, the aircraft manufacturer, developed the Matra defence company as well as the French colour TV system, Secam, and built Europe No 1 into France's most influential radio station.

The son of the Nalliac postman, Floirat left the local school at the age of 12 with only the basic elementary school certificate in his pocket. He became an apprentice cartwright, but followed the advice of his teacher to go to Paris to study industrial design and accountancy. Years later, he liked to recall that he had only 30 francs in his pocket when he arrived in the capital where he enrolled in a trade school.

After a period as a vehicle bodymaker, he created a firm selling automobile parts in 1927. A decade later, he had become a maker of buses and a road haulier. At the Liberation, he obtained a government concession to run bus services to the south and southwest of France. It was the start of a long collaboration with the state.

His business grew rapidly after the French Air Force granted him a contract to transport men and material to Indo-China where the war with the Vietminh was under way. Floirat's airline, Aigle-Azur, had other routes to Morocco and Tunisia.

Floirat made a huge profit on selling Aigle-Azur to the transport conglomerate, Chateaux Réunis, for £250 million. The airline became UAT, forerunner of UTA, now absorbed by Air France.

Another deal with the government followed when he invested his repatriated profits in Breguet-Aviation, makers of military transport planes, notably a double-decker "workhorse" aircraft. During his 12 years as chairman, he restored the company's fortunes before selling it — over lunch — to his friend, Marcel Dassault, manufacturer of French fighters.

In 1955, at the suggestion of the then prime minister, Edgar Faure, he had bought shares in a company controlling a new radio station Europe No 1 which was facing financial problems. Two years later, he became chairman and built the station into the one that set the nation's agenda for the day, encouraging a generation of journalists.

His thick Dordogne accent with its rolled Rs remained with him throughout his life. Later years saw him turn his attention to his native region where he established a model farm for apples, walnuts and truffles — he was honorary president of the French Federation of truffle producers. He launched a foundation for young farmers and then extended it to help young people in various sectors across France.

He remained mayor of the tiny village of Nalliac for more than 30 years and would drive over from his chateau to have a drink with the villagers in the local bistrot.

He is survived by his daughter.

RALPH GORDON-SMITH

Ralph Gordon-Smith, president of Smiths Industries, died on March 29 aged 87. He was born on May 22, 1905.

RALPH Gordon-Smith was the great grandson of Samuel Smith, the South London jeweller whose clock-making and repair business provided the foundation for today's international industrial company, Smiths Industries. His association with the company covered 66 years and he played his full part in its growth, particularly in the post-war era when for 22 years (1951-73) he was chairman, combining the role with that of managing director for most of the period.

He stood down as managing director in 1967, by which

time the company was employing 22,000 people and earning record profits on a record turnover. On his retirement as chairman he was invited to become the company's first president, and he remained a director until 1978. He held the honorary position of president until his death, bringing the active involvement of the Smith family in the business to a total of 142 years.

When Ralph Gordon-Smith was born, Smiths stood among England's foremost clock and watch-makers, and the company was finding a new outlet for its skills with instruments for the emerging motor industry. The family firm went public in 1914 and when he joined in 1927 the young Ralph already had the

benefit of two years' experience with chartered accountants Whitehill Marsh, a year with Kodak, and six months at the Talbot car company in France. By 1930 he was responsible for the company's export effort and in 1933 he succeeded his late grandfather on the board. His father was Sir Allan Gordon-Smith who stood down as managing director in 1947 in favour of Ralph, but continued as chairman until his death in 1951 when Ralph was invited to succeed him.

Keen to project his own management style, it was Ralph Gordon-Smith who established the principle of decentralisation. When he introduced the concept in 1957 it was part of what he called his "Three Ds" policy —



Decentralisation of operations; Delegation of authority and responsibility; and Diversification of products.

Throughout much of the

period when he was the company's senior executive, Smiths was a household name in the UK, as much for the extensive use of its products as for the level of its technological development. It was the foremost name for clocks and watches, while for British motorists Smiths was synonymous not only with car instruments, but for the great advances in car heaters and for pioneering developments in radios (sold under the Radiomobile name).

Much of the strategic direction he set for the company is also reflected in the scope of today's business activities. It was during Ralph Gordon-Smith's chairmanship that Smiths developed the world's first automatic landing systems for aircraft, providing the

technological expertise underpinning the avionics activity that is now Smiths Industries' largest business. Similarly, important moves were made into medical products, during this period.

As chairman, he strove to foster good employee relations. In 1960 he granted staff selling it — over lunch — to his friend, Marcel Dassault, manufacturer of French fighters.

In retirement Ralph Gordon-Smith lived in West Sussex with his wife Beryl whom he married in 1932. They had no children.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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LOMBARD LONDON -

With 25 years of folklore behind it, the rally that fired the world's imagination is hitting the long road again. Vaughan Freeman reports

The greatest adventure on four wheels

The Lombard London-Sydney Marathon, which sets off today from Chelsea harbour in London, is a triumph of hope over realism. Over the next five weeks, 212 adventurers in 106 cars will drive 11,500 miles half-way round the world, passing through a dozen countries. Every car is of a type that was on sale 25 years ago, and they will have nothing but the spare parts they carry with them for back-up.

The event has been planned to commemorate the first London-Sydney, which got under way a quarter of a century ago. In 1968, it is the greatest motoring adventure since then.

That earlier race, the Daily Express London-Sydney Challenge, offered competitors the promise, not just of glory, but of a £10,000 cheque for the winner. Its heroics, achievements and stories of derailing-do inspired an anthology of folklore that lives on today.

This time there are no prizes. Even the idea appeals Nick Britton, the organiser of the event. "Prize money? Good heavens, no," he says. "This is a gentleman's event."

Britton was inspired by the grip that the 1968 marathon still has on the imaginations, not just of sports fans but of anyone with sympathy for the outlandish, when he decided to stage the event again.

"I was at the Pirelli Classic in 1990," he says, "and listening to everyone talking about the 1968 marathon. Then, two weeks later, I was in Australia for another event. The remarkable thing there was that I was listening to young men talking about the marathon coming through in 1968, and they were clearly too young to have been born back then, let alone watch the event come through."

The 1968 event started from Crystal Palace, and the 50,000 spectators brought London to a standstill. That year 98 cars set out, crewed by competitors from 14 countries. They tore through Europe to Istanbul, and from there went on through Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India to Bombay, taking just eight days of non-stop motoring.

Of the starters, 72 survived as far as Bombay, where they boarded the



SS Chusan for the 13-day journey to Fremantle, in Western Australia. There began the most arduous stretch, and after three days of driving through the Outback, only 55 finishers reached Sydney.

This year, too, the forecast is that the Australian leg, 3,000 miles long and mostly over dirt and gravel desert roads, will once again be the hardest.

In 1968, the unexpected winner was the Scotsman, Andrew Cowan, in a Hillman Hunter, with Paddy Hopkirk taking second place in his BMC 1800. Roger Clark, rally champion and favourite, had led the race until two days before the end. But then he had two breakdowns, the second a broken rear axle on his Ford Lotus Cortina, and he dropped to tenth place. Special honours went to the first Australian to finish, Ian Vaughan, driving a Ford Falcon.

The route for this year's marathon is different, but dozens of the faces are the same. Cowan will be driving the same Hillman Hunter

that took him to victory in 1968, and Hopkirk, Vaughan and Clark will all be back for a second go. In all, there will be 25 crews who competed in the original marathon.

This year the route runs from Chelsea harbour to Dover, and then on through Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. After two loops taking the competitors out from Ankara and back, the whole field will be airlifted by two giant Antonov air freighters, and put down in Delhi.

For five days the cars will race across India to Bombay, where the Antonovs will again pick them up and drop them in Perth, in Western Australia, where they will begin the 10-day leg to Sydney — and a black-tie gala dinner at the opera house.

Rules for the event could not be simpler. Cars must be of a type that was available in 1968, and the

engine must be of the same number and configuration of cylinders as the original. The body shape must be retained, and the car prepared to full rally standard.

For some competitors, that has meant radically modifying the engines, brakes and suspensions of their cars, to give twice the power of the original vehicles while staying within the regulations. For others, it has simply meant finding a car from the 1968 era, putting in seatbelts and a fire-extinguisher, as required by the regulations, and filling up with fuel.

The cars are as different as the motives of the competitors. Of the 21 different makes, the smallest is a 1300cc belt-driven DAF, a car that finished the 1968 event. The most conspicuous is a Rolls-Royce Corniche. There will be Porsches, Fords, Alfa Romeos and two Moskviches, one of them driven by Alexander Ipatenko, who led a four-car Moskvich team in 1968.

Whatever the car, all face hard times ahead. Most of the driving in

Europe, and even in India, will at least be on tarmac-surfaced roads. But the difficult traffic conditions and notorious driving habits of Turkey will make the marathon hazardous, and so will the temperatures to climb to 40C. Wild camels will also be a danger in India.

The marathon will be won and lost in Australia, however. There the desert roads of the Outback are expected to decimate the remaining competitors, because of the heat, suspension-cracking potholes and suicidal kangaroos. The "roo" threat is such a major consideration that most of the cars will be fitted with special "roo-bars".

In addition, there are more than 40 timed special stages, each up to 100 miles long. Competitors will set off at one-minute intervals, and have to race the stage.

At the end of it all the cars will be shipped home as container freight, while the competitors who make it that far will fly home — and start planning for the next one.

Landcrabs and bulldozers

Solid and dependable cars are favourites — but look out for some surprises

Of all the cars in all the world, no one would put the 1960s Hillman Hunter near the top of the list when it came to great sporting machinery. A medium-sized, mid-range, four-door saloon, it was the archetypal British machine of its period, worthy, strong but — well, dull.

The fact that a Hunter won the original London-Sydney Marathon back in 1968 says more about the event than the car. It was an enormously long, rough, tough, car-breaking, tiring event, and the Hunter's sheer strength, and some clever pre-planning, paid off.

Having done it once, the very car that won in 1968 is entry number one in the 1993 Lombard London-Sydney Marathon, and crewed by one member of the same team, Andrew Cowan. And starting back in 34th place is the sister Hunter which also took part 25 years ago.

A look down the entry list does not turn up many sports cars, the MGs, Austin Healeys and Triumphs. It is not necessarily because sports cars are too fragile, but because they do not have such necessities as good ground clearance and interior space. Drivers can get badly on each other's nerves, sitting side by side for hours on end.

The best car for the London-Sydney Marathon is something basic, rugged, under-stressed, easy to repair. That is why the majority of entries are from makes whose image has been built on a reputation in the Third World countries where a blacksmith is of more use than an electronic ignition tester.

This is true of Peugeots, Volvos, VW Beetles, Ford Cortinas and even the good old Hunter, which is still being made in Iran. These are good, solid, dependable machines that can take anything.

Other strong entrants are Australian Ford Falcons and Mustangs, built for unmade roads at the back of beyond, that will battle it out with their European cousins, the Ford Escorts.

There are four Holden Monaros,

similar to the Ford Falcons, but Australian-built. Wieldy they are not, but with big V8 engines and muscle-hound bodywork, they bulldoze their way across obstructions.

The British equivalent would be something like the BMC (Austin and Morris) 1800s, affectionately nicknamed "Landcrabs". Big, heavy and immensely rigid, they do not have a very good power-to-weight ratio, though they use the same engine as the MGB, which can be persuaded to give a reasonable amount of power for long stretches at a time. They did well in 1968, crewed by the likes of Paddy Hopkirk and Rauno Aaltonen.

Another unlikely machine in such a sporting event is the Moskvich, two of which have been entered. But durability is what counts, and these two have been prepared by the Russians. Fighting them will be a pair of Czech-prepared Skoda 100MBs, the butt of thousands of jokes. But don't laugh too hard. They could pull off a surprise this year.

There are also a clutch of Datsun 510s taking part, not a car that is often seen in Britain. At one time they were the Escort Mexicos of Australia, competitive machinery in the rally stages, where performance counts.

Then there are the odd-balls: a DAF with rubber-band transmission, whose drivers took part in, and finished, the 1968 rally; a Rolle-Royce whose driver, Tony Wilson, was, when last heard of, looking for a co-driver who could put up a fair bit of cash; and a Ford Zephyr MkII, which rolled over in another rally a couple of weeks ago and had to have an instant rebuild.

The real dark horses, though, are going to be the Porsche 911s. They currently dominate historic rallying, they are very powerful, and they have perfect rally handling, not to mention a history of development that goes back further than the original event.

MIKE MCCARTHY

● The author is editor at large, Classic and Sportscar.

Love is — sharing an Escort to Australia

A couple decide to put their marriage plans to the ultimate endurance test

Sarah Perris and John Redding, the two least experienced drivers in the marathon, have a pot of gold ahead of them at the end of 11,500 miles of gruelling rallying: romance, marriage, and living happily ever after.

The two have decided to get married if their relationship survives this ultimate test, of 30 days in which they will rely totally on one upon the other, and drive half-way round the globe, in a 1972 Ford Escort bereft even of a radio to keep them company. They will pass together through the 40C heat of India, the dust-bowl of Australia and the inevitable breakdowns, frustrations and possible dangers such an adventure brings with it.

The two will be leaving London today with L-plates strapped as a joke to their car, number 39, as they are the only team among the 106 cars that until this year had absolutely no rallying, competition or race experience.

If it all smacks of amateurish enthusiasm bordering on folly, then Perris, who is public affairs manager at Ford of Europe in her more restrained moments, says she would be the first to agree with such a judgment.

Their car, an almost totally original 1972 Mark One Ford Escort, is the gleaming result of hundreds of hours work by Redding, who owns his own specialist

car repair and preparation company, Webster and Lancaster, based in London. Not for them the tens of thousands of pounds of new and upgraded engines, suspensions and transmissions that will grace some of the vehicles participating, or teams of engineers working round the clock on the car on their behalf.

The only modifications Redding has made have been to install an extra large fuel tank, and to bolt to the roof what has become known as the "sandwich box", to carry essentials like a pile of T-shirts, clean knickers, and numerous tubes of sun-block cream and insect repellent. Perris says: "A Mark One Escort, once you have got two spare wheels and tyres in the boot, plus an alternator and various other spares, suddenly becomes very small indeed. We have kept luggage to a minimum — just sun-block cream, as I am very, very white."

All sound-deadening materials and carpets have been stripped out to save weight, and the only concession to modern technology is a system of head-phones, and headsets allowing them to talk to one another above the din. "Some competitors have full-blown stereo systems in their cars," Perris says, "but we felt we could do without Radio Bombay."



John Redding and Sarah Perris: wedded to the wheel for a month

The two were put on the path to Sydney by Redding's enthusiasm as he prepared a car for another competitor in the marathon. "He was fired up about the car he was preparing, and about the marathon," Perris says, "and said 'Let's have a go'. And now here we are, having a go."

The past few months have been a blur of lost nights and frantic weekends. Like other competitors, they have been preparing their vehicle, and filling out mounds of paperwork, including sponsorship forms for Women On The Move Against Cancer, which is benefiting from their drive. Unlike other competitors, they have been cross-

ing the country entering enough one-day and all-night rallies to gain the required number of signatures on their until-now virgin international rallying licence so that they are allowed to compete.

Perris says she is almost unable to believe it. "We had our first day-rally in January at Cadwell Park in Lincolnshire. It was terrific fun. We went up the night before for scrutineering, not knowing what to do with the car, or where to go or what to do. It was like your first day at school. The rallying fraternity is so friendly, they looked at us with some charity and showed us how to do it."

Having finished the day's rally-

ing, as other competitors loaded their race machines, spare tyres, wheels and parts on to trailers and low-loaders, Perris and Redding climbed back into the Escort, which will tackle the London-Sydney, and drove home.

This is rallying on the most modest of shoe-strings. "Our car cost us probably around £15,000 to prepare," Perris says, "compared with the £30,000 or £40,000 that many of the cars would have cost. Our car has less than 90bhp. The engine, gearbox and suspension are all original, and more than 20 years old. Some of the cars competing are twice as powerful."

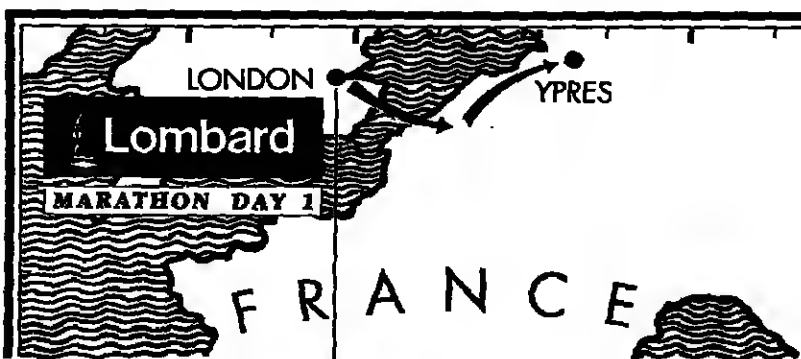
"We are not up there trying to win. We are up there having a real adventure, which I think is what this event is all about — people of mixed abilities having an adventure with the eventual aim of getting to the Sydney opera house."

If the car is going to be tested to the limit, then so, too, is their future as a couple. "If anything is a test of a relationship, let me tell you, spending 30 days in a Mark One Escort, going through 40C temperatures and God knows what else, this will be," Perris says.

"If we get out of it the other end still talking to each other, we have agreed that we will get married. If our relationship can stand this, we think it will stand pretty much anything. It will be a test of temper and a test of tolerance."

VAUGHAN FREEMAN

Drivers can get on each other's nerves, sitting side by side for hours on end



0800, 17 April.
106 Cars depart from
Chelsea Harbour, London.

Early this morning 106 classic cars set off on the greatest motoring adventure for twenty five years. The Lombard London-Sydney Marathon.

Last held in 1968, it's one of the world's most arduous tests of endurance and reliability for both cars and drivers. As the UK's largest finance house with a major involvement in the motor trade,

Lombard are proud to be sponsors of this great adventure.

All the cars are pre-1969 models and there are an incredible 25 competitors that started in the original marathon. Their epic

journey will take them 9,791 miles across 12 countries and 43 special stages, to finish in Sydney on May 16th.

In the 25 years since the first marathon, Lombard's resources have given

SYDNEY MARATHON



All going fine — and then the back wheel fell off

Bandits in Afghanistan, 'wakey-wakey' pills and a lost wheel in Australia... Evan Green looks back at the hair-raising and humorous adventures of the first rally

The challenge may be as great this time, the potential for adventure as strong, but this is a very different London-Sydney Marathon from the one held 25 years ago. More has changed than just the route, the victim of wars and revolutions. There are fundamental differences in the rules.

For instance, organised servicing has been forbidden. Like ordinary motorists, drivers whose cars need attention will have to take their chances at garages along the way. There will be no more aircraft landing at remote places with new suspension for the leading car and fresh orange juice for the drivers, and no more estate cars, laden with parts and mechanics, thundering after the field to rebuild any of the work cars that might falter.

There will be no more sending a man with spare wheels from London to the Iranian-Afghan border — by plane to Moscow, Delhi and Kabul and by hire car for the next 1,000 miles — in case new tyres were needed.

This year, there will be night stops. It will be more of a rally, if an extraordinarily long one, and less of an endurance test. So there will also be no more driving non-stop,

with only one scheduled rest break between London and Bombay and none from Perth to Sydney.

This year, there was no practising over the route. It was forbidden, which was an easy rule to enforce because no one knew the exact course. We still do not. It will be revealed as we go along.

And this time, we have special stages. There will be more than 40 sprints through forests and private estates, over mountains and across deserts: wild, exciting, hazardous blasts over good roads and bad, to send the points tumbling and the adrenalin coursing.

It was different back in 1968. I drove one of the four Austin 1800s that the British Motor Corporation entered. Tony Fall, Paddy Hopkirk and Rauno Aaltonen were in the other cars. That meant only one Englishman. BMC could be accused of many things in those days, but never xenophobia.

The route was known in advance, and so all the principal teams sent out survey parties, finding and mapping the worst sections, planning service. We were an all-Australian crew — "Geligite" Jack Murray, George Shepherd and I — and we drove to London. Not only did we learn the course. It was

a cheap way of getting to the start.

That preliminary journey had its moments, as when we were crossing the Lataban Pass east of Kabul and were held up by three bandits. They were emptying the car of cameras, clothes and rally equipment when the youngest found one of the new-fangled gas cigarette lighters and turned his moustache into ash. The others laughed so much they put their Lugers back in their belts and sent us on our way. They even helped repack the car. They are funny people, the Afghans.

We had entered the marathon because it promised to be a great adventure. We found that a wonderful mix of people was taking part. There were men and women, the blasé and the bizarre, the hopeful and the hopeless. There were hard-nosed pros and wide-eyed amateurs. Some wanted to win and nothing else, and others just wanted to reach Sydney.

The early stages in 1968 were easy: fog in France, boredom in Italy, the first signs of hysterical crowds in Yugoslavia. It was not until we were deep in Turkey that we reached a difficult stage: the 173 miles from Sivas to Erzincan, through villages and over



Determined father: Evan Green with his Ford Escort. He will be travelling this year with his son Gavin who was in short trousers in 1968

mountains at an average 63mph.

Never the fleetest of cars, our 1800 had been fitted with many weighty extras, including a double floor — so that if one were worn away by stones, we should still have something under our feet. Even with all that steel it was nimble, and on the twisting road over the mountains, we passed 23 cars.

Then we came to the long, climbing straights that preceded Erzincan, and we dropped back. Roger Clark was fastest. We were eleventh.

We did better over the Lataban Pass. Despite losing brakes when a

stone tore away a hydraulic line, we picked up three places.

I had not slept since Turkey. It was not because I was super-fit or supercharged, but because back at Sivas Jack had given me what I thought was a sweet but was, in fact, a "wakey-wakey" pill. A friend of his, the chief executive of a pharmaceutical company in Sydney, had had a batch made for him. The friend said it would keep him awake for a week.

Frightened of its possible side-effects, Jack tested the demon pill on me. Like the Afghan bandits, he had a funny sense of humour. He

laughed all the way to Bombay, where I finally fell asleep.

Thus we went to Australia in eighth place. By the time we had covered the only difficult stage in Western Australia, we were fifth.

The Flinders Ranges of South Australia were perfect territory for our car: twisting, rough roads, plenty of rocky creek crossings, a trap every mile of the way. By now, we were the leading Australian crew. Most of the cars in front of us were scared and wobbly, and we were beginning to think we might do well. Jack was even checking the prize-money.

That is when our back wheel fell off. We lost four and a half hours and finished 21st, behind the leading Russian in a Moskvitch.

And that is where we start today. Ford Escort, Number 7, one place behind the leading Russian, Alexander Ipatenko, in a Moskvitch. I am travelling with my son Gavin who 25 years ago was a boy in short pants who was distraught when his dad's wheel fell off. These days he lives in London. I live in Fiji, which makes me, I believe, the first person who has come from those exotic islands to take part in an international motor sporting event.

A Hillman back in the hunt

The British-built workhorse that unexpectedly stole the show a quarter of a century ago leads off the field

Andrew Cowan is a substantial man. He has a big smile, the warmth of an optimistic, easy-going disposition and the robust good nature of a farmer from the Scottish borders. This morning at 8 o'clock he sets off from London in a 25-year-old car to drive halfway round the world, hoping to repeat at 56 a feat he was lucky to accomplish at 32.

As winner of the first London-Sydney Marathon in December 1968, Cowan starts number one of the 106 cars due to be flagged off on a month-long journey across 12 countries. He also has other good credentials. He is one of the best and most experienced long-distance endurance drivers in the world, with countless victories in the toughest rallies in Europe, Africa and Australia behind him.

Yet he is not a favourite to win this one. The odds are on car number two, a Ford Escort driven by Roger Clark and Tony Moy. Twenty-five years ago Clark led until two days before the finish, when he had two breakdowns in quick succession, the second the failure of his Ford Corina's back axle. He borrowed one from a local fisherman and finished tenth.

Now he has a car rebuilt from a veteran Escort. "It is light, tough and quick," he says. "These are the three main ingredients for this event. Twenty-five years ago I thought I had my name on the trophy, and it was one I really wanted to win. It's time to have another go at it."

Cowan cheerfully admits destiny was on his side in 1968. The London-Sydney looked like a new kind of long-distance rally in the style of the great inter-city races run in the dawn of motor sport. The Monte Carlo rally and the Coupe des Alpes were becoming artificial

events, and rally drivers were looking for a new challenge. So speed over the plains and deserts of the Balkans, the Middle East, Asia and Australia was to be the test.

The challenge was taken up by a formidable entry of works teams from Ford, the British Motor Corporation (BMC), the Rootes Group, Porsche and Citroën. Clark took the lead in Turkey in his Lotus Cortina, and held it through Afghanistan. He only ran into trouble in Australia.

The lead was then taken by the Citroën DS19 of Lucien Bianchi and Jean-Claude Ogier, and the Ford Taurus 20MRS entered by Ford of Germany, driven by Simo Lampinen and Gilbert Staepelaere. But in the closing stages both suffered accidents, the Citroën in the final 100 miles.

So Cowan and his crew of Colin Malkin and Brian Coyle drove steadily to an unexpected triumph, ahead of the Austin 1800 of Paddy Hopkirk, Tony Nash and Alec Poole. They were followed by Ian Vaughan (Ford Falcon), Sobieslaw Zasada, the redoubtable Pole (Porsche 911S), Rauno Aaltonen (Austin 1800) and Bruce Hodgson (Ford Falcon).

Cowan's car was shipped home to a hero's welcome, after the only major international victory the humble Hillman Hunter ever gained. The car was immediately placed in honourable retirement, and scarcely ever turned a wheel again. After the dissolution of the Rootes Group, later Chrysler, which owned it, it became the property of the Royal Scottish Automobile Club.

Cowan went on to a glittering career driving for Ford, BMC, Vauxhall, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi and Audi. He won the



Time for another go: Andrew Cowan in his rebuilt Hillman

1977 London-Sydney and an astonishing 18,000-mile five-week-long marathon in South America. He took charge of the formidable Mitsubishi Pajero team in the gruelling and dangerous Paris-Dakar, winning in 1985 and finishing second in 1986, and he won the Australian Safari twice.

He also survived a serious accident in the Andes driving a Triumph 2.5PI, when he overtook in a dust cloud and suffered a cracked neck bone.

Cowan and Johnstone Syer, his veteran co-driver, will drive the victorious Hunter again this time, stripped down and rebuilt by Mitsubishi Rallyart Europe at Rugby. "It has only done 16,000 miles," Cowan explains. "All the body needed was two front wings, which were rusted, and a new back axle. Holbay rebuilt the engine, but it still only has 118 bhp."

With about the power of a standard 2.0 litre Vauxhall Cavalier, Cowan is unlikely to break any records. "Navigation across the Nullarbor plain, which spans Western and South Australia, is going to be tricky," he says, "and the unsurfaced parts in Australia will be as rough as ever. The pace of the rally is not as hectic, which means there are no all-night drives and so we no longer need a three-man crew. But the competitive stages will be as competitive as ever."

Cowan is undaunted about his lack of horsepower. "We weren't the fastest car in 1968. But we were first to the line in Sydney. The Hunter still isn't fast, but it's built like a country outhouse and could well outlast the sprinters."

Sprinters in this context means his old rival, Clark.

ERIC DYMCK

Look out, here comes another battlefield

Wars and revolution have forced the rally to be airlifted out of the danger zones

Negotiations for the 1993 London-Sydney marathon gave Nick Brittan, the organiser, a trial of his skills that would make the most hardened diplomat pale.

In December, 1990, for instance, he was in Kabul, where he found himself holed up in a bomb-blasted hotel, and forced to leave the country on a Russian aircraft that could only fly out by dropping decoys every ten seconds to fool incoming Sam missiles.

It made him wonder, he says, if enabling 212 rally fanatics to drive from London to Sydney was such a brilliant idea.

Brittan had gone to Kabul to try to negotiate passage through Afghanistan for the marathon. But he was trapped in the war-torn city for five days, and it became obvious that Afghanistan was no place for the event.

During the past 30 months several different routes were worked out. Some took the marathon through Yugoslavia, clearly a problem area. Then there was the matter of getting from Turkey to India. The 1968 route went through Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, but this soon proved impracticable.

One alternative went through Turkey and Georgia to Azerbaijan, where cars and drivers would cross the Caspian by ferry to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and then be airlifted from Tashkent to Delhi. Another took them through Turkey and Iran to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. But both were eventually ruled out by political turmoil and wars.

Only six weeks ago, when schedules and route maps had been printed, visas were in place, and the first magazine articles published with outline details of the "final" route, the whole event

teetered on the verge of collapse when the route through Iran, which Brittan thought was agreed, became a no-go zone.

He describes what happened. "I was in Iran six weeks ago, doing a final reconnaissance. The Iranians had been terrific, friendly and helpful. We got all the way to the border with Turkmenistan, where we were to cross over for the next leg, and the Iranians wouldn't let us out."

"We spent the night in what they euphemistically called a 'safe house' with bars on the window and we were spun round the next day to Tehran."

Planning had begun in August, 1990, when Brittan, who had been a competitor in the original 1968 rally with his wife and co-driver, Jenny, decided to see if a re-run of the event was feasible. "I knew Australia would be all right," he says, "and Western Europe would not be a problem. It was the bit in the middle that was tricky."

Pakistan was a typical experience. "The authorities said there would be no problem," Brittan says. "Then the officials in Lahore gave me a list of 47 departments I had to contact to obtain the right permissions."

He flew to Kabul from there. "Nobody said the war was still on," he comments. "I was one of

three people in a 220-room hotel, with shells landing so close 35 windows were blown out. We had anti-personnel landmines in the street, a curfew and a blackout. I was stuck there five days."

Brittan spent Christmas day 1990 in Moscow winning approval for the route through Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and coming across two of the world's largest aircraft, Antonovs, which he hired for \$1 million. In the event, the aircraft are to play a crucial role, airlifting cars and competitors from Ankara to Delhi, and then from Bombay to Australia. But the route fell through.

Despite the setbacks, Brittan announced the marathon to the world's press on January 16, 1991, hours before the opening of the Gulf War. "Saddam Hussein had the Mother of all Wars, but we had the Mother of all rallies," he says, "and we got a better press than he did."

By August 1991 rumours of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan ruled out the route through the second of these, and he explored the route through Iran. That was the one that fell through six weeks ago.

In Europe, the fighting in Yugoslavia meant that the route through that country had to be abandoned by January 1992.

"I still have reservations for rooms at the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo," Brittan says. "I can't even cancel the hotel bookings. The Holiday Inn is now just a pile of bricks."

He hopes there will be no more last-minute holes appearing in the route. "I think we are all set," he says, "provided Belgium doesn't declare war on France in the next 24 hours."

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The Second Helms...
BBC2, 9.25pm

OPINION

Turning point
A bloody siege...
Bosnia will need...
long surge of com...

Maastricht moves

The government...
nessed its way...
tee stage of the...
the opposition...
high cards to p...

Life on Mars

Capitalists p...
investing in...
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COLUMNS

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WEEKEND MONEY

LONGING
Sara James and her...
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Home contents...
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some areas rising by...
more than 80 per cent
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THE POUND

US \$ 1.5280 (-0.0245)
German mark 2.4656 (-0.0102)
Exchange Index 90.0 (-0.8)
Bank of England official close
(4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100 2824.4 (-15.3)
Dow Jones 3465.10 (+9.18)
Nikkei Avg 20287.86 (-377.98)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base 6%
3-month Interbank 6 1/8%
US Federal Funds 2 1/4%
3-month Treas Bills 2.84-2.83%
Long Bond 6.75%

CURRENCIES

New York: London
£/\$ 1.5265 £/\$ 1.5265
\$/DM 1.6135 \$/DM 2.4680
\$/Sfr 1.4762 \$/Sfr 2.2491
\$/Fr 5.4520 \$/Fr 8.3430
\$/Yen 112.59 \$/Yen 171.99
\$/SDR 1.0968 \$/SDR 1.2657
London Forex market close

GOLD

London Fixing (\$):
AM 337.00 PM 337.85
Close 339.00-339.40
New York:
Comex 338.85-339.35*

RETAIL PRICES

RPI 139.3 March (1.9%)
* Denotes midday trading price

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THE TIMES

SATURDAY APRIL 17 1993

Inflation rise dents hopes of cut in rates

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS
CORRESPONDENT

■ Dearer food caused by sterling's devaluation pushed the headline rate of inflation up to 1.9 per cent last month, compared with 1.8 per cent in February

INFLATION edged up for the second month running in March, suggesting that prices are past their recessionary trough and will rise steadily as economic recovery and the effects of sterling's devaluation take hold. Headline inflation rose to an annual rate of 1.9 per cent, from 1.8 per cent in February and 1.7 per cent in January — a level that increasingly seems to have reflected the bottom of the inflation cycle. Between February and March, the retail price index rose 0.4 per cent.

When mortgage payments are stripped out, prices rose by an underlying 0.7 per cent in March, giving an annual rate of 3.5 per cent, compared with 3.4 per cent in February and 3.2 per cent in January. An increasing number of economists believe the underlying rate is set to rise above 4 per cent — the upper limit of the government's inflation target — perhaps late this year or during the first half of next year.

The latest set of inflation figures appears to have tipped the balance of opinion in the City on interest rate prospects. Although there is still a possibility that base rates could be cut again if the recovery appears to falter or sterling appreciates too strongly, hopes of lower interest rates are receding.

A good indicator of this is three-month money market rates, which have been pointing to unchanged 6 per cent base rates in the coming months but are now beginning to indicate that the next movement in interest rates may be up.

Nigel Richardson, economist with Yamaichi International Europe, said: "The mood in the gilt-edged market has turned from optimism to cautious pessimism. Nobody is saying that interest rates are going to go up soon — and they probably won't until at least the end of this year — but they are saying that there now appears to be no need for lower rates."

One reason why it will be difficult for inflation to stay at current, still historically low, levels, is that the last fall in headline inflation was largely caused by mortgage rate cuts. But mortgage rates are not expected to decline much further, if at all.

Driving the small increase in inflation in March were rising prices of food, clothing and footwear, as winter sales ended, and of fuel. These outweighed the remaining effect of mortgage rate cuts announced in January.

The Central Statistical Office said that, although some high street prices were rising, there had still not been much follow-through from higher import prices due to the devaluation of the pound. These are running at an annual rate of more than 8 per cent. The CSO said attempts to raise prices had not succeeded because of lack of demand.

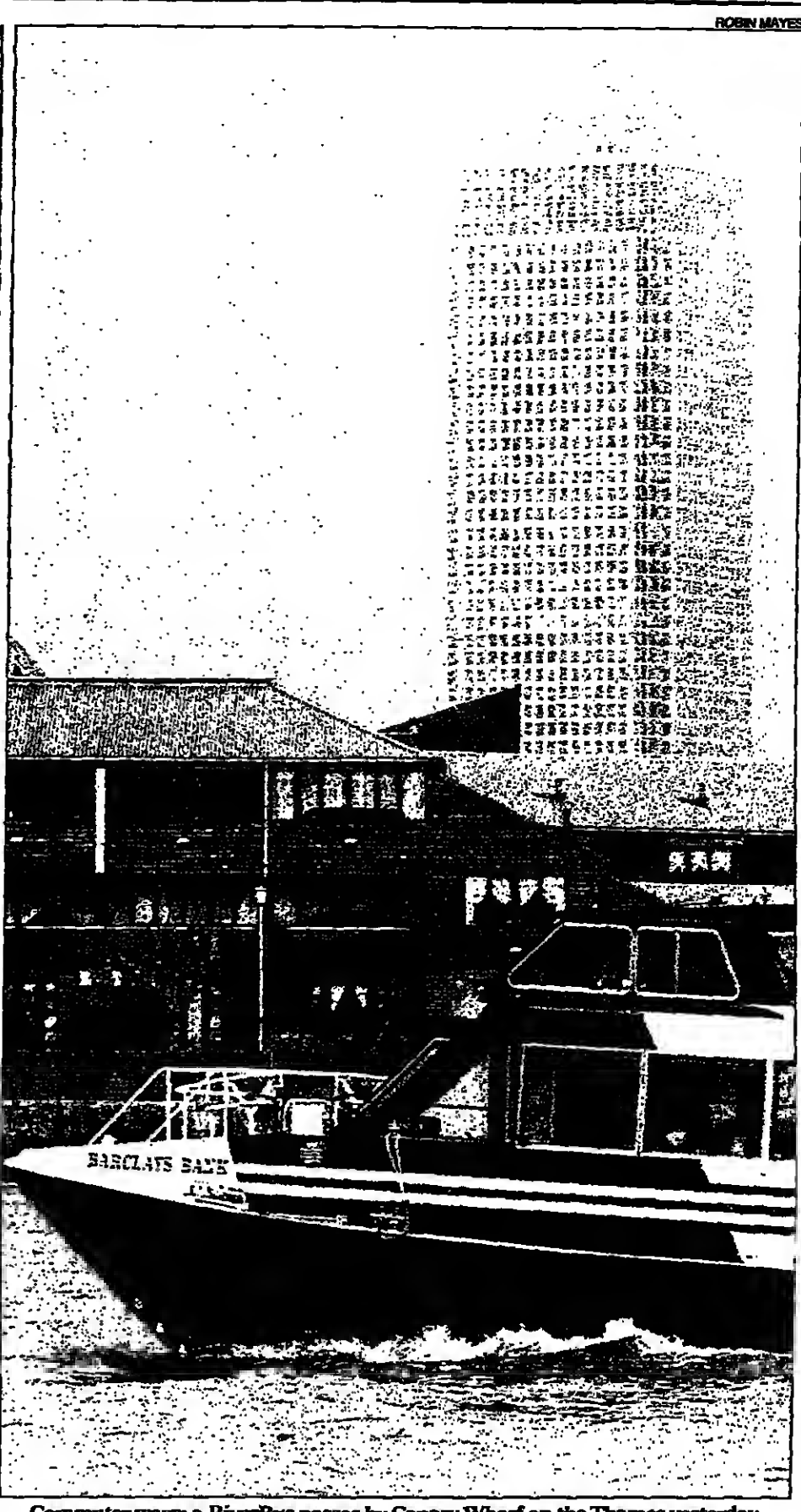
This could take as much as 0.7 per cent off the April RPI. The impact of higher excise duties announced in the Budget should add a small amount to the RPI in April, and costs of food, clothing and footwear and motoring are all likely to go up. Offsetting this, however, should be falls in electricity prices.

Ian Harner, chief economist at Strauss Turnbull, said: "There may be one more dip but only one more. Inflationary pressures are beginning to take hold again, even though the upward momentum is still subdued at this stage."

There was a measure of disappointment in financial markets. The gilt-edged market, which heard yesterday that it is going to have to absorb another slice of gilt-edged stock, worth perhaps another £3 billion, on April 28, fell back by more than a full percentage point at the long end of the market.

The Bank of England announced that it would be selling gilts with maturities between three and six years, an auction clearly designed to attract bank buyers, so boosting M4 money supply, one of the only indicators still signalling deep recession.

Sterling slipped back to end at 80.0 on its trade-weighted index, compared with Thursday's close of 80.8. It lost a pence against the mark and more than two cents against the dollar. However, currency economists said the slide was purely technical, with traders taking profits.



Commuter wave: a RiverBus passes by Canary Wharf on the Thames yesterday

RiverBus takes the strain out of strike

By GEORGE SIVELL
CITY EDITOR

RIVERBUS, operator of the catamaran service between Greenwich and Chelsea Harbour, rode the crest of a wave on the Thames as passengers queued to get on its boats despite a near doubling of capacity to cope with the demand created by the rail strike.

The group, owned by administrators to Olympia & York, the Canary Wharf group, chartered in four pleasure boats to add to its fleet of ten catamarans, and reckoned to be operating at the rate of 1,200 seats an hour from Greenwich, two-and-a-half times its normal rate.

RiverBus began 1993 needing to raise £1.8 million of cash to survive the year. Yesterday, Michael Davies, the business manager, said the group had almost got all the money but that the arrangements were not all signed and sealed.

He said that the hope arising from days like yesterday was that more and more extra passengers would be encouraged to use RiverBus. The service carried 390,000 passengers in 1991 and 670,000 in 1992. The group hopes to break even by 1995 and become self-financing in 1996.

Another beneficiary of the rail strike was National Express, the coach operator that recently went public. It operated an extra 100 coaches to add to the 600 that would normally run. It said the Brighton to London route was "heaving" and noted that Colchester to London and Tunbridge Wells to London services were very busy. Like RiverBus, National Express hopes to entice some regular rail travellers.

Builder comes to aid of the EBRD

By OUR CITY STAFF

IF EVER a bank needed friends, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development needs them this weekend. And yesterday, it found one.

Bovis Construction, part of the P&O Group, has come to the aid of the embattled EBRD, one of its most prestigious, if heavily criticised, clients, with a two-page press release — presumably unsolicited — on the fitting out of the bank's headquarters.

Bovis helpfully makes clear that the fitting out, including the controversial change to Carrara marble, tastefully not mentioned by Bovis, was carried out using "materials at competitive rates".

Under fierce attack from the media and the government for the amount spent on its

Broadgate headquarters, the EBRD has been trying desperately this week to present a more favourable image of itself.

Bank officials make no secret of the fact that they have sought to involve firms working on their City edifice in their counter-offensive. As one official put it: "It would be abnormal, if we didn't discuss such matters with companies engaged in the project."

Bovis was appointed in January 1992 as construction manager to fit out the EBRD. The high-class fittings and especially the £750,000 change of marble cladding have been a focus of media criticism.

Jacques Attali, the French president of the EBRD, who has deliberately sought to give

the bank a high profile, has been invited to Bonn next Tuesday to discuss the allegations of excessive spending with Theo Waigel, the German finance minister who is the chairman of the bank. Herr Waigel has given a warning that heads must roll if the allegations are substantiated.

Bovis, in response to "press interest", said in its statement that the fitting out programme for the EBRD was one of the fastest ever for a scheme of such scale and complexity and was the work of a team of experts renowned for "cost-effectiveness". The company has fitted out 1.5 million square feet of office space at the bank so far.

Furthermore, Bovis said it had taken advantage of the

recession to buy materials and services at "competitive rates" for the EBRD. Chris Spackman, the chairman and chief executive of Bovis Construction, said that the bank was at the "leading edge" in terms of innovative design, construction technique, environmental considerations, cost-effectiveness and the quality of work.

Bank officials, faced with the criticism that so far they have given less to the economies of the former Soviet empire — their lending target — than they have spent on their own offices and staff costs, argued that the speed at which the bank had been able to start operating compared very favourably with the start-up phase of similar institutions such as the World Bank.

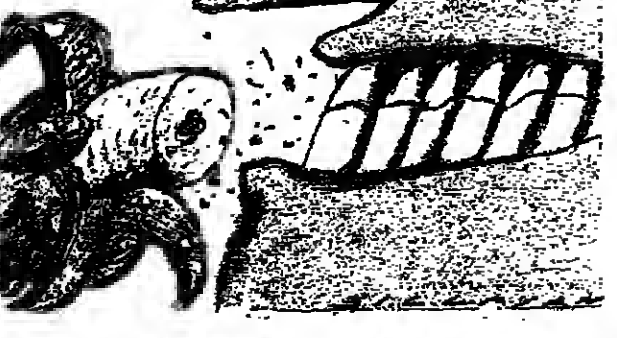
Slip-up over Fyffes 'approach'

By COLIN NARBOROUGH

FYFFES, the Irish fruit distributor with a London listing, has done battle with the big American fruit companies before, and is evidently ready to fight off a 115 Irish pence per share "approach" from an unidentified, most probably American, suitor.

After hasty deliberation yesterday afternoon, the Fyffes board said it had decided that the approach (not a bid, despite the price) which valued the company at £122.2 million was "not in the best interests" of the firm and that discussions had been terminated.

An earlier statement during the morning had sounded less dismissive. That statement had been prompted by news of the mystery suitor published in the Irish press. Word of a possible bid had circulated in the markets during the week, pushing up the price by 20p since Tuesday.



The McCann family, who bought Fyffes from Chiquita, the American banana group, in 1986, would be advised by most analysts to hold on to its independence.

With the new European Community banana regime coming into place in July, companies like Fyffes and Geest, its United Kingdom rival, should have a golden period ahead of them.

that will be allowed in at a low tariff.

Chiquita, which clashed with Fyffes in 1990 over the Irish company's attempts to ship Honduran fruit, is probably too cash poor to bid for either Fyffes or Geest at present. But the profitable Dole, Chiquita's US rival, is keen to build up its 14 per cent share of the European banana business to close to the 26 per cent of Chiquita, the market leader.

However hungry Dole may be for more of the European market, the advantageous position Fyffes and Geest, both companies with solid balance sheets, find themselves in means that the price will have to be right.

In the year to October 1992, the last figures published, Fyffes made a net profit of £122.3 million on a turnover of £1524.3 million. Earnings were 5.9p a share.

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BUSINESS PROFILE: Patsy Bloom

Dogged determination wins through

The Business Woman of the Year, who runs Pet Plan, tells Susan Gilchrist that she is not a scatty animal lover

Photographs of Patsy Bloom, 52, can be deceptive. The founder of Pet Plan comes across as a kindly, mild-mannered, animal-lover, but in reality she is an ambitious, forthright, and commercially shrewd operator. When it comes to business, Ms Bloom is as hard as her perfectly manicured scarlet fingernails.

But then she is the Business Woman of the Year — an accolade she won in recognition of the meteoric rise of Pet Plan Group, the company she founded in 1977.

Patsy first had the idea for a business specialising in pet insurance after her dog ran up massive veterinary bills. "I rushed round to my animal-mad neighbour, Annie Dickens [now deputy managing director of one of Pet Plan's four divisions] and said: 'I've got this great idea. Would you buy pet insurance for a tenner?' She said she would, and that was it."

Patsy borrowed £250 to start the business and hoped she would earn £25 a week from it to supplement her meagre salary at the Central British Fund for Jewish Refugees, the charity where she worked. Sixteen years on, the business has a turnover of £22.5 million, insures more than 350,000 animals and has franchise operations in Canada and Italy.

From a poky, windowless office above the old Wood Lane Underground station in Shepherd's Bush, Pet Plan has graduated to a spacious Georgian-style house in an affluent west London suburb. The walls of the reception are adorned with schmaltzy blown-up photographs of kittens and puppies sent in by adoring pet-owners. Gnasher, the winner of the Most Appealing Puppy of the Year competition in 1988, perched inside an old leather boot, stares out beguilingly from one picture.

But the sentimentality stops firmly at the door to Patsy's own office. She describes herself as "a business woman" and readily admits she is not "a scatty animal lover".

Chambers, her Yorkshire terrier that scuttles about the office, seems just as much a fashion accessory as the chunky gold jewellery and immaculately tailored suit she is wearing.

"When we first started, many of the staff were animal-

mad and I had to point out that this wasn't an animal welfare organisation, it was an insurance company," she says. "I took the view that I had to be the firm one."

Her commercial influence on the team is backed up by David Simpson, 47, her business partner, whom she met through a mutual friend. "When I started out, I decided I had to have a partner and it had to be a man," This comes as a surprising admission from the newly crowned Business Woman of the Year but, as Patsy is at pains to point out, few bank managers took women seriously in 1977. In general, she prefers working with women, as they pay greater attention to detail and are more willing to take on tasks. "Men play pass-the-parcel," she says.

But David's quiet diplomacy is a perfect foil for Patsy's feisty bluntness. Moreover, his financial background in merchant banking and property complements her marketing training as an account handler in an advertising agency.

While clearly proud of the company's successes, David is happy to stay in the background, and in the early years preferred to stay a silent partner. It was left to Patsy, accompanied by Annie, to travel round dog shows and veterinary surgeries promoting what was essentially a new product.

Although horses were usually insured, pet-owners, particularly private ones, had never entertained the idea of taking out a policy on their animals. "It was like inventing Kleenex," says Patsy. "I had to sell the concept before I could sell the product." She would sponsor local meetings of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) but only on condition that they would allow her to give a talk. "They must have thought I was mad," she laughs, but today Patsy is an honorary member of the BSAVA.

Coming from a marketing rather than an insurance background actually worked in her favour as she looked at the product from an owner's rather than an insurer's point of view. "The policies that did exist would only provide cover for animals under eight, and would not pay up if the sickness were hereditary or congenital. What use was that," she derides. Although Pet Plan has become more like



Best friend: Patsy Bloom with Chambers, her Yorkshire terrier that almost seems like a fashion accessory

an insurance company as premium income has climbed into the tens of millions of pounds, its customers still feel they are members of a friendly club and frequently send in pictures of pets. It is hard to imagine Commercial Union receiving a similar post-bag.

In the beginning, Pet Plan was underwritten by the Dog Breeders Insurance company (DBI), but it rapidly outgrew the company. In the first year, 1,300 animals were insured. By 1980 that figure had increased tenfold. Patsy then joined Lloyd's and last year was the largest sterling account in the Lloyd's livestock market. Ironically, the business really took off when Pet Plan got its first competitor, Paws, which is owned by Jardine. "I was terrified, but it was the best thing that could have happened to us. The veterinary profession suddenly felt it could really promote pet insurance." Today, there is not a surgery in Britain that does not recommend pet insurance — an admirable achievement for something that barely existed 16 years ago. Despite the arrival of further competitors, Pet Plan still has 51 per cent of

the small animal insurance market. In 1988, Patsy decided to enter the horse market as well. Bolstered by the purchase of Norwich Union's equine book last year, the company is now the largest leisure horse insurer. Relishing the prospect of building up a business all over again, Patsy took personal control of the equine division from the start. "I wasn't conscious of it at the time, but I suppose I was getting a bit stale. It was fun to get my hands on something that was small again."

She also worked for various charities as a hobby. "What appealed to me was raising the most money. I wasn't interested in the welfare side." She insists success, not money, is now her prime motivation. However, she clearly enjoys the material accoutrements of success, particularly her convertible Mercedes sports car.

To some, her choice of car may be less than subtle, but then nothing about Patsy comes in small doses. Her strong personality is reflected in the vivid primary colours she wears and the dramatic gestures she uses to punctuate her conversation. She is a voluble talker, frequently stopping to ask if she is talking too much, then charging on before you have time to answer.

She approaches work with equal vigour. A self-confessed workaholic, she has neither a husband nor children. "I married the company," she says simply. There are no regrets as the charms of conventional suburban life hold little appeal for her. She admits she is demanding of her work colleagues, expecting them to be as dedicated as she is. Her erratic management style may not be popular, but as she says: "I demand a lot, but then I seem to get it." This does not stem from personal vanity or arrogance but from an unwavering conviction in the business. She confesses to regular bouts of self-doubt, even now, and spent most of the early years "brightened to death". But she insists she has never doubted the company, not even in its darkest moments as in the early eighties when an unsuccessful flirtation with the US market nearly caused its collapse. She is nothing if not tenacious.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Mondeo sales increase Ford's market share

THE launch of Ford's Mondeo car, which replaces the Sierra, has helped the company achieve its biggest March share of the European market since 1984. Ford's share last month was 12.5 per cent, up 0.5 per cent on the March 1992 figure. About 7,500 Mondeos have been registered in the UK and sales are said to be particularly buoyant in France, Italy and Spain. Ford's share of the European car market for the first three months of this year was 12.1 per cent, up 0.3 per cent on January to March 1992 even though the total sales in the industry were down 16 per cent.

Ford's share of European commercial vehicle sales in the first quarter of this year was 12.6 per cent, up 0.6 per cent on the same period last year and the best January-to-March figure since 1980. Meanwhile, Jaguar of Coventry has announced a new "sporty" XJ6 model — the 3.2S. The car, costing £28,450, is aimed at the younger driver and will be available from mid-May.

Holiday wind-up sought

LEGAL moves to wind up French Country Holidays, the holidays group, were made in the High Court yesterday. A petition was presented on behalf of Michael Helsenine, President of the Board of Trade. The official receiver has been appointed by the court as provisional liquidator pending the petition's hearing later this year. Since November, the company has traded from Lowestoft, Suffolk, selling holidays in French cottages.

BICC share alternative

BICC is offering shareholders a 50 per cent increase over the proposed final dividend if they opt for an enhanced share alternative. The proposal saw BICC shares rise by 14p to 359p. If half BICC's shareholders take up the offer, the group says, its net debt would be cut by £28 million. The choices are a cash dividend of 13.25p a share, payable on the earlier date of June 10, or new shares to a value of 19.875p, for which Barclays de Zoete Wedd offers 18.875p, free of all costs.

Esso project proceeds

ESSO Australia and BHP Petroleum said they will proceed with the A\$600 million (£279 million) development of Tuna oil field, in Australia's Bass Strait. Esso, owned by Exxon Corp, said the project would begin with the construction of a second platform. West Tuna, with production due to start in 1996, Tuna A has been producing oil since the 1970s. Esso is the operator of the Bass Strait oil and gas fields and a joint owner with BHP. BHP shares stayed at A\$15.

Missile link approved

THE European Commission has approved a joint venture in close air defence systems (CADS) between France's Thomson-CSF and Short Brothers, the British aeronautical and defence systems subsidiary of Bombardier of Canada. The commission said the activities of the two companies involved in the venture, called Short's Missile Systems, were complementary. In view of the absence of overlap, the commission had decided not to oppose the operation.

Brasway in £3.4m sale

BRASWAY, the engineering group, has sold its tube business to Senior Engineering for up to £3.4 million. Brasway, based in Wednesbury, West Midlands, said it was pulling out of tubing because the industry was dominated by big businesses and it could no longer compete. The tube business, which employs 90 people, made a pre-tax loss of £157,000 in the nine months to January 30, on a turnover of £7.9 million. Senior already has the Phoenix Steel tubing businesses.

Swallowfield dips

SWALLOWFIELD, manufacturer of personal care products, made pre-tax profits of £127 million, down from £2.1 million, in the year to end-December. The fall was partly attributed to the purchase and reorganisation of Parbel in Belgium. Terry Organ, chairman, said Parbel had given Swallowfield a valuable entry to the continental market. Earnings fell to 7.3p from 13p a share. The total dividend is reduced to 4.4p a share from 6.1p, with a 2.2p final (3.9p).

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Dublin sells half of Irish Life stake

By SARAH BAGNALL, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

THE Irish government has raised Ir£104.5 million (£104.1 million) from the sale of half its stake in Irish Life, the republic's biggest insurer in the market for life and pensions policies.

The disposal, which reduces the government's holding from 34 per cent to 15 per cent, follows Irish Life's announcement on Wednesday of a 3 per cent increase in profits for 1992. The pre-tax figure advanced from Ir£40.6 million to Ir£41.6 million.

City analysts say the sale was expected and reduces the government's stake to a token level. In June 1991, the government sold 56 per cent of the company, lowering its holding from 90 per cent to 34 per cent.

Stephen Dias, an insurance analyst at Goldman Sachs, said that when that disposal

was made, it was understood that the government intended to sell its remaining shareholding. However, it agreed not to sell any shares for about two years.

Yesterday's sale of 55 million shares was at Ir£1.90 a share, a small discount to the current share price of Ir£1.96. The first disposal, of 168 million shares at Ir£1.60 a share, raised Ir£269 million for the government.

The shares were placed by Davy and NCB, the two Dublin stockbrokers that were involved in the original privatisation. Two-thirds of the shares went to Ireland, the balance being bought by non-Irish investors. This breakdown reflects the existing shareholder base. Most of the new shares are thought to have been bought by existing shareholders.

Barclays unveils plan to raise \$300m in America

By A CORRESPONDENT

BARCLAYS plans to raise \$300 million in the US domestic market through an issue of fixed-rate dollar-denominated convertible capital notes. The notes, which have no fixed maturity but which can under certain circumstances be redeemed by Barclays after ten years, will rank as Tier 2 capital for the bank under the capital adequacy rules implemented by the Bank of England.

The notes will be convertible into dollar-denominated non-cumulative preference shares

at Barclays' option. If so converted, the shares will rank as Tier 1 capital. The issue is being lead-managed by Goldman, Sachs & Co. An application will be made to list the securities on the London and New York stock exchanges.

Patrick Perry, group treasurer, said: "This is an innovative product which will further strengthen the capital base of the bank. Issuing a Tier 2 capital is cost-effective, but the structure also gives us the flexibility to increase our Tier 1 capital should we wish."

THE TIMES

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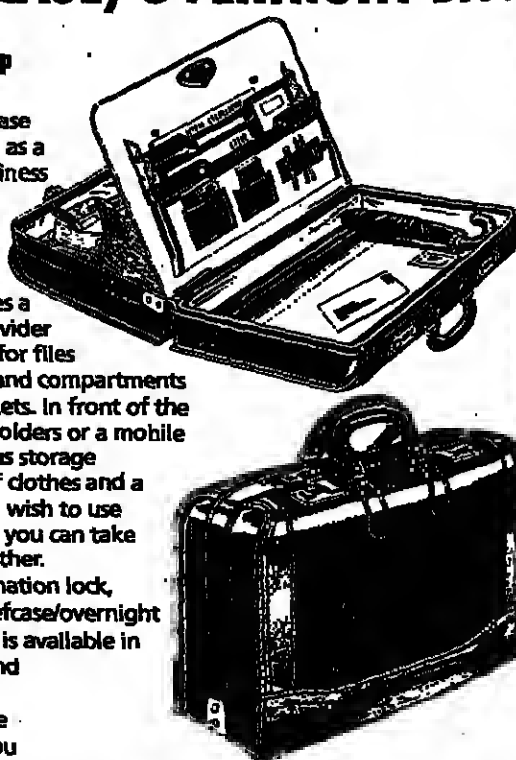
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WEEKEND MONEY

THE TIMES SATURDAY APRIL 17 1993

Edited by Sara McConnell

dest gains

with the all-ordinary index, the key market indicator above the psychological level of 1,700 points. The index closed, down 0.9 points at 1,703.2.

Frankfurt — The Dax index closed 3.64 points higher at 1,678.85.

Time to end this nice little earner

It is hardly a secret that life assurance and investment companies have a wicked way with charges. Monthly policy fees, annual management charges and, most ubiquitous of all, swingeing upfront charges to cover "setting-up" costs of life policies, all take a large chunk out of people's investments. Given that the actual setting up of a policy involves little more than keying a bit of information into a computer, investors are only too aware that most charges are deducted to cover brokers' commissions.

Those wised up to this may think they can pay less by approaching the company directly and cutting out the middleman. No chance. As one Weekend Money reader discovered, it is "standard practice" to deduct the same amount from the policy of an investor who has not used a broker as from one who has. As no-one has earned this spurious "commission" deducted from the policy, it presumably goes straight into the company's pocket.

In industries less apparently influenced by *Alice Through the*

Looking Glass, buying wholesale rather than retail means big savings. There is little or no mark up and savings are passed straight onto the buyer. Buyers can and do expect to be able to choose to shop to save if they prefer. This is what a free market should mean.

One life company inadvertently gave an insight into the industry's thinking on this subject when he muttered that advisers would be angry if they discovered that investors going direct were getting "better terms" than those going through advisers. The argument is that life companies should be encouraging people to get financial advice rather than showing them a way they can buy life cover more cheaply.

If life companies meant what they said about wanting to encourage more people to take out life assurance or pensions, they would worry less about the already excessive



SARA MCCONNELL
PERSONAL FINANCE WRITER

influence of overpriced intermediaries and more about offering people a choice.

No-one should have to pay for a service they have not used. This is, or should be, a matter of principle. But the practical effect of charging more will be to disadvantage most those who can least afford it.

The reader, whose letter appears in Weekend Money this week, was unfortunately made redundant at the beginning of this year and had to discontinue his personal pension contributions as he had no pensionable earnings and to continue his

COMMENT

SARA MCCONNELL
PERSONAL FINANCE WRITER

contributions would have meant breaking Inland Revenue rules. He was charged a penalty which was supposed to "recoup the initial commission paid and to recoup the setting up and administration of the policy." But, the reader wrote back indignantly, he had gone directly to the company and not used a broker. No matter, said the company. Our rules say "the payment or otherwise of commission does not affect the allocation rate or the charges."

This week, after three and a half months of correspondence, the company agreed to refund the charge

intended to cover the commission. The argument for disclosing a breakdown of commissions and expenses gets stronger by the minute. If people believe brokers give good advice they will go to them. If they do not, or they already know what they want, they will not. And they should be given enough information to decide.

Uncovered

The main aim of most people buying motor, household and holiday insurance is to find the cheapest possible policy that seems to give a reasonable amount of cover. This is even more important now that there are dramatic differences in prices and cover between one policy and another. They expect insurance brokers, who should be experienced in reading the increasingly restrictive small print of policies, to steer them

through the difficulties and check they are covered for what they need to be.

This is not happening. Consumers' Association researchers visited general insurance brokers in six towns last month asking for standard contents cover apart from an expensive portable computer and a possible absence on holiday of more than 30 days. But almost universally brokers asked too few questions about the cover needed, the researchers were not told about exclusions under the policy and only four out of 81 were actually given a copy of the policy. And this casual approach is obviously just the tip of the iceberg.

Almost all broke the Association of British Insurers' voluntary code of conduct for intermediaries which requires them to reveal commission if asked and explain whether they are company agents or independents.

A voluntary code is not enough and as the Consumers' Association pointed out does not meet EC recommended requirements. New tighter rules need to be introduced.

Buying abroad beckons again

By Sara McConnell and Liz Dolan

ANYONE who has spent the winter poring over estate agents' brochures advertising idyllic-looking second homes in Europe should take the plunge this summer. Most of Europe is one big buyer's market, say lenders and agents.

The market in France has been flat for several years, but is starting to perk up. One lender, Banque Woolwich, said it was busier now than at any time since 1989. Abbey National France said it was sending out hundreds of brochures to prospective buyers but added that most were cautious about actually committing themselves.

Michel Godchaux, director of Abbey National France, said: "For the last two months, it has not been as busy as I would like. But now is definitely the time to buy." Three French banks cut their base rates to 9.75 per cent from 10 per cent this week and further cuts could happen, allowing new buyers to fix loans at attractive rates. Stealing is also showing signs of strengthening against the franc after last September's devaluation of the pound that pushed up borrower's payments on franc mortgages overnight.

Buyers should be in a strong position to drive a hard bargain, particularly on new developments. People should expect to be able to knock up to 15 per cent off the price, said M Godchaux. Spain and Portugal are now starting to emerge from the same sort of housing crisis that has affected

the UK. Prices have plunged by up to 30 per cent from the highs of the late 1980s in Spain and Portugal, with whole new developments along the Costa and in the Algarve still lying virtually empty.

Demand from Britons, Germans and Scandinavians, which had been "absolutely colossal" in the 1980s, suddenly died at the end of the decade, says Steve Emmett, managing director of Brian French, a Harrogate estate agent that specialises in homes in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. "It was amazing, like turning off a tap. We couldn't believe it would go on, but it's been four years now without a break." Prices are now just starting to recover in some parts, so this should be a very good time to take the plunge, Mr Emmett says.

In Italy, prices in Tuscany and Umbria, the traditional British haunts, have soared after a boom between 1985 and 1990. So the cognate are moving on to similar, but less fizzy, regions such as Lorraine, where homes cost half as much as in Tuscany and 80 per cent of Umbria.

The Italian market is less boom-and-bust than Spain or France, but has still seen enormous price rises in the past few years. Between 1989 and 1992 house prices climbed nearly 20 per cent a year, but growth has slowed considerably recently to about the rate of inflation, currently 5 per cent.



"Can't wait to get away": Sara and Jeremy James at their rented home in Clapham

Engage a good lawyer in France

By Sara McConnell

TRAPS for the unwary in the French property buying system are legion, compounded by people's reluctance to confess that they do not understand what they are signing.

The system is fairer to buyers than the British one, committing buyer and seller early on, avoiding gazumping or gazundering and allowing buyers a cooling off period when they receive their mortgage offer. But it does not make many concessions to those unfamiliar with it, said Anthony Hancock, a partner in Radcliffe and Co, solicitors in Geneva.

Contracts for buying French property are in most cases drawn up by a notary, a public official, who may also handle the sale. It is a mistake to assume he will give advice or point out possible difficulties in the contract. He often acts for both parties and his role is to make sure deeds signed are authentic. Mr Hancock said: "The average British person expects the notary to give advice but it is not his job to give advice." People should take advice from a solicitor familiar with

the French system before signing anything, he said. When they first make an offer and sign a preliminary contract, prospective buyers will be expected to put down a deposit, normally 10 per cent of the purchase price, which they will forfeit if they then back out. The preliminary contract is legally binding. Buyers should expect to pay up to 15 per cent of the purchase price in legal fees and taxes. They should also make a will for their French assets, otherwise a husband or wife would not automatically inherit the property if their spouse died. Several British banks and building societies, including Abbey National and the Woolwich, have French operations, and can supply English-speaking solicitors and translations of contracts.

Buyers can get a fixed rate at 9.4 per cent or a variable one at 10 per cent, depending on the term of the loan and how big a deposit they have. Banque Woolwich cut its rates this week and is now offering buyers with a 50 per cent deposit a rate of 9.2 per cent fixed for 15 years.

Happy with their Lot

WHEN Jeremy and Sara James bought their house in the Lot et Garonne in 1984, they were cautious about committing themselves, both financially and emotionally to spending a lot on its refurbishment.

Now, nine years later, they have become so attached to the French countryside and the home that they are restoring, that they have decided to retire there to live in five years, leaving their present rented home in Clapham, south London.

By then they will have finished paying off the whole of the £50,000 they have borrowed over the last six and a half years to restore the interior of their French retirement home.

The house, which had been a "wreck" in 1980, had had the exterior restored by a French speculative builder by the time that the couple discovered it was for sale.

"They immediately wanted to buy the property, Mr James said: 'The builder was about to vandalise the inside but we managed to catch it just in time.'"

However, they needed to borrow more money for the interior renovations, having already bought the freehold of the property outright for £80,000 francs.

At first, they took a modest loan of £15,000, with the local branch of Crédit Agricole, but

when they became sure they wanted to spend a substantial amount of effort and money on renovating the property, they encountered reluctance on the part of Crédit Agricole to lend any more for the renovation.

Mr James said: "French banks are reluctant to lend for improvements. And so much for the European Community — absolutely no-one in the United Kingdom will lend on French property."

By "pure hearsay" he discovered that the Woolwich, the third largest building society in the United Kingdom, owned a French operation called Banque Woolwich.

About a year and half ago, they borrowed £40,000 from Banque Woolwich and used some to repay Crédit Agricole. Later they borrowed another £10,000 which they will pay

off within six years. The interest rate is 11.75 per cent fixed for the remainder of the loan's term.

Although the Woolwich, like other institutions aimed at the United Kingdom buyer, provides access to English-speaking lawyers and other professionals, they managed the legal side of their purchase themselves.

They encountered a slight hitch with France's inheritance tax laws when they discovered that their legal agreement as it stood would have left Mr James with only half the house if Mrs James had died before him, while the other half would have gone to her brother and sister. They quickly changed the agreement.

They also discovered for their cost that French insurance policies will not cover any risk unless it is specifically listed in the policy.

When stone martens started eating away at the roof insulation of the house and the whole roof had to be removed and replaced, the cost was not covered by the insurance policy as this risk had not been mentioned.

The couple also discovered that it is difficult to find a contents policy which will pay out if the occupier is absent from the property for more than 30 days.

SARA MCCONNELL

Under the spell of old Tuscany

By Liz Dolan

DESPITE a surge in property prices in recent years, Italy is definitely not the place for people who want to make a quick buck. This is because the heavy extras attached to buying a home there can lift the basic price by between 9 per cent and 14 per cent.

Fees will include those charged by notaries and estate agents, to which buyers as well as sellers pay 2.5 per cent commission. An independent lawyer who speaks good English is another necessary expense, his fee being open to negotiation.

Abbey National Italy, which has ten branches, claims to undercut rates on Italian bank mortgages by at least 2 per cent. At the moment, it charges just 12.9 per cent, compared with the Italians'

15-16 per cent. Buyers must be prepared to pay a 10-30 per cent deposit as soon as an offer has been accepted and draft agreement drawn.

Italian properties are not cheap. Richard Altman, managing director of Abbey in Italy, calculates that a typical three-bedroom farmhouse in need of restoration is likely to cost £100,000-£150,000 in Tuscany, £100,000-£130,000 in Umbria, and £80,000-£110,000 in Lorraine, depending on its location.

The easiest way to find a property is to use a specialist estate agent with United Kingdom connections. These include Brian French of Harrogate, Hello Italy in Liguria, and Green Umbria in Perugia, the capital of Umbria.

Contracts for buying French property are in most cases drawn up by a notary, a public official, who may also handle the sale. It is a mistake to assume he will give advice or point out possible difficulties in the contract. He often acts for both parties and his role is to make sure deeds signed are authentic. Mr Hancock said: "The average British person expects the notary to give advice but it is not his job to give advice." People should take advice from a solicitor familiar with

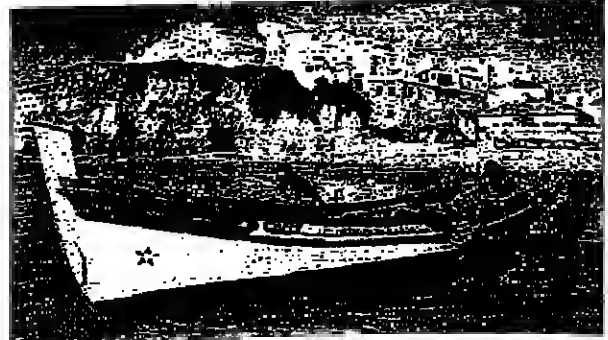
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Bargains galore throughout Iberia

WHERE many Britons seeking a second home in France and Italy are looking for romantic hideaways in rural paradises such as Provence and Tuscany, those buying in Spain and Portugal tend to go for flats and villas in coastal developments on the Costa and the Algarve.

As both the Spanish and Portuguese property markets are just beginning to emerge from a deep depression, this could be just the right time to pick up a neglected, but promising, property away from the coast at a knock-down price. Whiteways Properties, a subsidiary of Brian French of Harrogate that specialises in Spanish, Portuguese and Greek properties for British buyers, has just linked up with an inland agent in Rioja, northern Spain. Other firms with Brit-



Tranquil — and cheap: the lure of the Algarve

ish links are likely to follow. Because many new developments were built along the coast just as the eighties property boom died, this too is now a buyer's market. A good quality apartment, with two bedrooms and two bathrooms in a popular coastal resort can now be had for £60,000-£70,000. Two years

ago, it would have cost up to £100,000. A luxury villa on a high class estate, with four bedrooms, a swimming pool, on a marina, with top-class golf and polo facilities close now costs about £175,000.

The Federation of Overseas Property Developers, in London, has 35 member companies specialising in

European property. As in other continental countries, the main difference between buying property in Spain and Portugal and in the UK is the extra costs, typically 8-9 per cent of sale price.

David Wells, managing director of Abbey National Gibraltar, stresses the importance of employing an independent surveyor and lawyer. He says: "Quite often people only use the developer's own lawyer because they don't know where to go for an independent one." Spanish mortgage rates are normally 1-2 per cent above bank rate, currently 13 per cent, and expected to fall, but compare badly with the National Westminster and Abbey National Gibraltar, which charge 8 per cent.

LIZ DOLAN

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Lenders launch spring offensive of fixed rates on home front

AS THE spring house-buying season gets underway, many banks and building societies are continuing to cut their interest rates to lure people back into the property market (Lina Saigol writes).

The Bank of Scotland, National Westminster Bank and Wimpey Homes are offering fixed-rate mortgages for both new and existing borrowers for between two and ten years.

National Westminster has a choice of three fixed-rate loans for new customers. They can choose to fix their payments for two years at 6.79 per cent (APR 8.1 per cent) or for five years at 7.99 per cent (APR 8.3 per cent) or ten years at 8.79 per cent (APR 8.8 per cent). First-time buyers taking out these loans do not have to pay the £250 arrangement fee.

The Bank of Scotland's mortgage is fixed until May 4, 2000, at 9.3 per cent (APR 9.2 per cent) and is portable. The maximum loan is £400,000 with a £250 arrangement fee.

For buyers able to raise the 5 per cent deposit on their new homes, Wimpey Homes is offering a two-year fixed-rate mortgage at 3.99 per cent (APR 7.6 per cent). Wimpey will pay buyers' legal expenses of up to £500, and the 1 per cent stamp duty on the home.

The arrangement fee is £250, available to first-time buyers as a "£250 and move in" scheme on selected properties.

Affordability, through methods like fixed-rate loans, is the key for housebuyers, according to a survey carried out by National Opinion Poll for the TSB.

Of 500 people surveyed, 31 per cent said affordability was the key for consumers, while 29 per cent cited the need to move.

Mike Kirsch, TSB's marketing manager for mortgages, said: "People are looking for homes in the right place at the right price - to live in, not to make money out of. They're nesting, not investing."

Telephone mystery tour was not on the cards

By Lina Saigol

FORGETTING to take Barclaycard's 24-hour helpline number with him on holiday proved to be a time-consuming mistake for Weekend Money reader Simon Cox. When Mr Cox had his wallet stolen in Florida last October it took between 30 and 40 calls, he says, to block his Barclaycard and other plastic cards.

After reporting the theft to Miami Beach police, he telephoned one of the international banks in Miami hoping that it would be able to give him a number to call to arrange to put a stop on them.

He says that the bank gave him a number, which put him on to another number, and that put him on to another number. It eventually took Mr Cox between 30 and 40 calls to make sure his cards could not be used.

"I don't know why I had to make so many calls," he said.

Barclays said: "We are baffled as to why Mr Cox had to make so many calls. When we checked the list of numbers that he said he had ended up



Siren calls: Simon Cox's phone-call marathon in Miami eventually did the trick

calling, we saw that some of the numbers have nothing to do with Barclays. Some were even private individuals in the UK, and we don't understand where he got them from."

In a letter to Mr Cox, Barclays claims that it has a record of the time that the

cards were blocked: "It appears that your father had already telephoned Barclaycard at Northampton to report the theft of your cards. His call was logged at 17:30 GMT on 4 October."

But Mr Cox said that Barclaycard should have telephoned him to let him know that the cards had been blocked. "Credit card centres should have each other's numbers so that they can give out the correct number straight away."

"I admit that I didn't have the lost-and-stolen number with me, but that shouldn't be the only way of quickly cancelling your cards," Mr Cox said.

He added that Barclays' slow response in dealing with his complaint was not "the level of service, security or peace of mind that it advertised. Its treatment of the complaint has been wishy-washy, like papering over the cracks."

Barclays said it had taken a long time to reply to Mr Cox because it had conducted a thorough investigation:

"Because so many cards do get stolen, we have an elaborate system that allows us to check back to ensure that cards are blocked."

"This means that we are able to trace all the times that calls were logged in to various Visa centres. Checking all this takes time."

As a gesture of goodwill, Barclays credited Mr Cox's account with £25, £5 of which was for the phone calls he had to make.

But, he says: "Three days of my two-week holiday were spent sitting by the phone waiting to hear if my cards had been successfully blocked or not. I think that Barclays owes me compensation of between £300 and £800."

Barclays said: "We have never heard of a complaint of this nature before. We think that the difficulty in the situation is that Mr Cox should have kept a note of the lost-and-stolen numbers to call."

"The cards were blocked, which means that all the cards acted as they should have."

Cash still king in trips to the shops

ONE IN three Britons is looking forward to a cashless society where debit cards are the most common payment method, according to a Gallup survey published by Visa Delta (Lina Saigol writes).

The first Visa Delta survey into British shopping habits found only one in five people expects cash to continue as the main means of payment in the future, and predicts that by 1995, there will be more than 740 million point-of-sale transactions per year worth more than £18 billion.

Today, cash remains the most common method of payment. While a sixth said that they would prefer to use a debit card when shopping for groceries, 60 per cent said that they would use cash when

buying clothes. Visa Delta said that despite the "convenience" style of the 1990s, three quarters of Britons would still prefer browsing around the high street shops, to using other more advanced shopping systems.

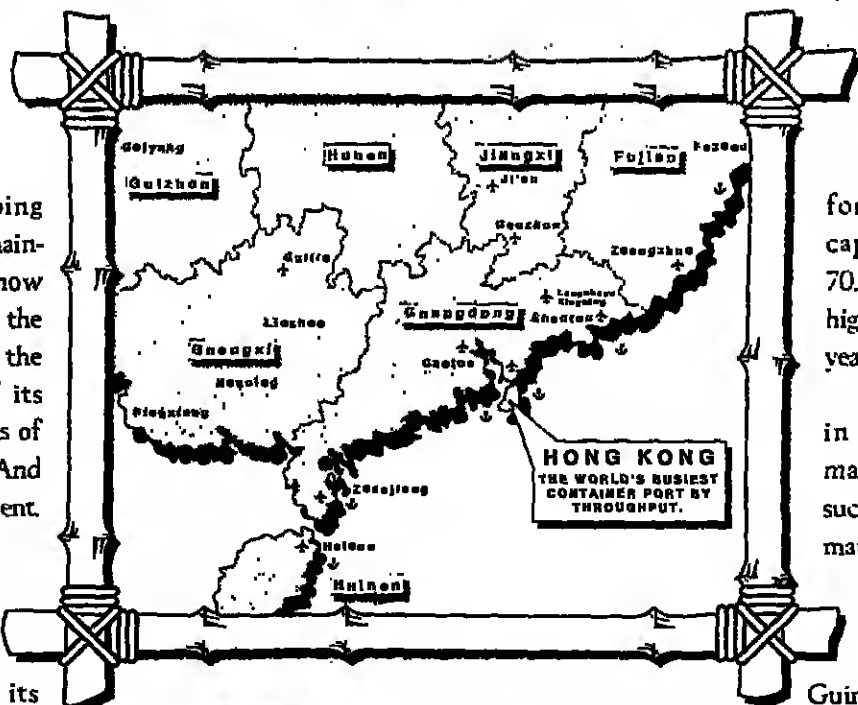
Less than one in six Britons would opt for the convenience of responding directly to television adverts offering products for sale, Visa Delta said.

Nearly a third of women claimed that they find men get in the way when they are shopping or admitted to feeling rushed when shopping with their partner. Half of the men questioned considered it their duty to carry the largest share of the shopping and a third said that they preferred to go shopping alone.

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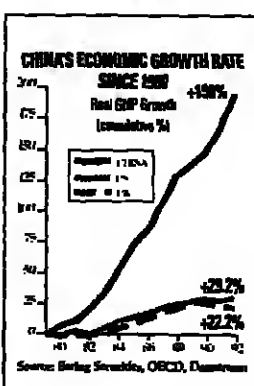
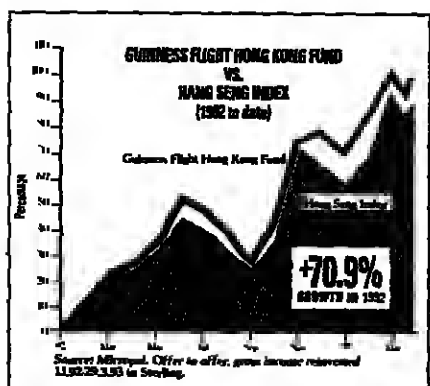
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Another knock for drivers as GA leaves agreement

By Sara McConnell

SOME motorists face further rises in premiums after delays in payouts after claiming because a long established agreement between insurers to cut paperwork on claims appears to be breaking down. Any increases in administration costs because of this will be borne by policyholders.

General Accident, the second largest motor insurer with one million policyholders, has said it will no longer operate a knock-for-knock agreement with other insurers.

Under this agreement, if two motorists insured with different companies have an accident, each insurer agrees to pay for the damage sustained by its policyholder. This saves on administration costs as insurers do not have to spend time corresponding and, in extreme cases, going to court to decide who was at fault and who should pay. In the past, the costs of claims have evened out.

But GA says most of its policyholders now have comprehensive cover rather than just third party, fire and theft, and it is paying out too much under knock-for-knock.

Insurers operating the agreement are bound to pay for damage to their own comprehensively insured policyholders' vehicles, whatever the circumstances, but cannot pursue insurers whose third party policyholders have caused an accident. Companies with many third party policyholders benefit because they do not have to pay for damage to their policyholders' vehicles. GA said: "We believe



that companies with a higher proportion of third-party policyholders benefit more and that we are bearing an unfair share of the cost." It suggests it should only agree claims on a knock-for-knock basis if both policyholders are comprehensively insured. If one of the motorists had only third-party cover, GA would correspond with the other insurer involved to decide whose fault it was and who should pay.

Other big insurers are considering whether to continue knock-for-knock. Commercial Union said: "We are looking at this at the moment. It

should be moderately easy to make a judgment on whether the agreement still benefits us or not. But if there is additional administration, this will almost exclusively be passed onto the policyholder." Motorists with third-party cover are likely to find payments are delayed if insurers stop operating the system or if GA's amended system is adopted, it said. Three-quarters of CU policyholders have comprehensive cover.

Derek Plummer, marketing manager at Norwich Union, the largest motor insurer, said the present system of settling

claims meant those with comprehensive cover were subsidising those on third-party. Abandoning or restricting the knock-for-knock agreement would mean a rise in premiums for third-party cover but could mean a slight fall in the cost of comprehensive cover. Mr Plummer said, Norwich Union is set to decide "in a few days" whether it will continue to stay within the agreement.

Although newer firms selling directly to the public rather than via brokers do not operate a knock for knock agreement 60 of the biggest insurers do.

Screen cover shattered by MoT test rules

By Shirley Davenport

MOTOR insurers may be forced to revise their terms of work, raise premiums. Eight years ago, windscreen repairs to get their cars through the new MOT test.

Now that cracked, scratched and chipped windscreens can fail the test, insurers believe they could be burdened with the cost of windscreen replacements, which have already soared in recent years.

After the introduction of the new MOT regulation in January, insurance companies expect to pay an additional

300,000 windscreen claims this year, despite having raised their £25 excess to £40. But they fear the higher excess may not be enough to cope with

'It has long been suspected some people have other repairs done and claim the bill was for a windscreen'

the demand and are evolving various methods to keep costs down. Among the options is to set a windscreen claim against a no-claims bonus.

Nigel Richardson, RAC quality insurance manager, said: "The problem is, now windcreens form part of the MOT, more motorists will claim on windscreen cover. 'Now insurers are on the receiving end of vehicle crime and government regulations, they are going to have to re-

strict terms. If that does not work, raise premiums. Eight years ago, windcreens were a good insurable risk with few claims, but times change." To deter motorists from choosing expensive windscreen replacements, insurers will encourage them to opt for less costly repairs instead. In exchange, they will pay the entire repair bill without demanding the specified excess. Those insurers that arrange deals with accredited windscreen firms may either impose a higher excess on customers who have their

windcreens repaired elsewhere, or pay only part of the cost. The sales director of a national windscreen repair firm said: "The idea is to discourage over-charge and cheating insurance companies." said "It has long been suspected some people have other repairs done at a garage, and claim the bill was for a windscreen."

A few insurers offering additional windscreen cover for non-comprehensive motor policies for an extra premium will no longer do so. Many are small Lloyd's syndicates that offered the windscreen extension at £15 for motorists with only third party, fire and theft.

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rates are worse than previously thought. For £100,000-worth of cover for ten years, smokers will pay £20.60 a month; non-smokers pay £12.50.

Northern Rock Building Society has launched a postal account offering 8.05 per cent gross, 6.04 per cent net, on investments of £50,000 or more. Rates are guaranteed not to fall below current levels

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Century Financial Services has extended Lifecare Benefit, its critical illness policy, to cover replacement of heart valve, loss of sight, loss of limbs, loss of speech and terminal illnesses. The policy also offers free limited cover for up to five children. Premiums start at £10 per month.

Learning the harsh lessons of higher education costs

By Shirley Davenport

DELAYS in paying student grants are plunging students deeper into poverty, and many say they are living well below income-support level. Those who need to have their grants reassessed because parents can no longer afford to contribute are sometimes forced to wait several months for their new grants to be paid.

Universities that started soup kitchens last year for hard-up students without jobs during the summer break opened them again for the Easter recess.

At Leeds University, where students are given free soup, rolls and fruit, a welfare worker said: "Some of these students cannot go home because their parents are having a hard time. We are seeing students who have no money to live on for weeks, and it's almost impossible to do anything for them."

"A lot of my time is spent chasing up students' grants. Many were not paid until several weeks into the term. The number of short-term loans we have had to pay out has doubled since last September."

Portsmouth University reports that a growing number of middle-class students, worried about parents who have been made redundant, feel unable to tell their families about their money problems.

Gareth Shepherd, Portsmouth University's welfare adviser, said: "Constant worry about money puts them under



On the march: protesters drawing attention to the plight of some university students

tremendous stress, undermines their health and affects their education. The scale of the problem is far greater than anyone can imagine.

"We spend most of our time dealing with late payment of student grants. Some grants expected last October were not paid until December or January. One authority had such a backlog that it shut down for three weeks to cope with it."

When James, a 23-year-old

student at Portsmouth, learnt that his father had been made redundant he applied to his local education authority to have his £1,000 grant reassessed. His parents were no longer able to go on contributing £1,000 a year to support him. In the five months it has taken for James to be reassessed, his bank overdraft increased to £2,000 and he is behind with his rent. He has just heard that he will receive

an extra £1,300, but not for another three weeks. By the time he approached the university for help he was penniless and had nothing to eat.

He said: "They loaned me £100 from the emergency fund, but it only lasted a week. After buying food, I had to repay friends who needed the cash." He does not want to be identified to save his parents the worry of knowing, James says the worry over money has

set him back in his studies and he is going to have to work hard to catch up. His rent is £160 a month in a house he shares with four other students, but he has been living on £100 a month since last October while his grant was reassessed.

"I was £60 in debt every month before buying food," he said. "Last month, NatWest bounced my rent cheque for the second month, and took away my cheque book and credit card. Yet I had been assured by a senior manager they would honour the cheque since I have written proof that I will be receiving £1,300 grant money."

"Frankly, I don't know how I've managed to get by all this time. I have been living on a diet of root vegetables and pasta. And the worry about money has had a detrimental effect on my work. It was only after I knew I would get the money that I was able to concentrate on my studies for the first time in months."

Students who are late in applying to their local education authority for a grant or need reassessment because their family circumstances have changed usually suffer the longest delays.

An education department spokesman said: "We would be concerned if local education authorities were seriously delaying the payment of grants. I would have thought the first step would be for the student to make enquiries through the authority."

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Helping parents spread the pain of college bills

By Lina Saigol

AS LARGER numbers of students enter higher education, and fewer qualify for state grants, parents are finding they have to meet more of the cost.

Under present rules, students will get no help if their parents' residual income is more than £1,000 a year. Those whose parents' residual income exceeds £13,630 a year will find their grant reduced. Figures from the education department show that in the 1989-90 academic year, only 27 per cent of students received the full grant and 29 per cent, no grant at all.

Many parents and grandparents mistakenly believe that unless a lump sum has been set aside to finance higher education, they will be unable to pay

college fees. Sun Life has published a book explaining the alternatives available. *Financial Planning for Education*, written by John Kirkhope, covers the whole subject of educational funding, including grants, student loans and funding arrangements.

The company has also produced a brochure, *Education Funding with Sun Life*, which outlines a possible loan arrangement with the Royal Bank of Scotland. The loan can be backed either by property or by a policy geared to repay the loan at maturity.

Facilities such as these are useful for people who haven't planned ahead," said Richard Needham, Sun Life's Business Development Officer.

Like other companies, Sun Life also offers schemes for those who have lump

sums to invest or can afford to save regular amounts every month. For those with lump sums, one choice is the Sun Life Educational Trust. Sums invested buy annuities, which provide regular payments to cover fees. The trust has charitable status, so it can reclaim income tax on the interest part of the annuity payments.

Another option is for parents to make regular contributions to life assurance policies that pay out tax-free lump sums after ten years. "Because the grant has been frozen since 1990," Mr Needham said, "parents often think they cannot meet the costs of college fees, but with a scheme that spreads the costs of payment over the years, there is no reason why parents can't give their children the best education."

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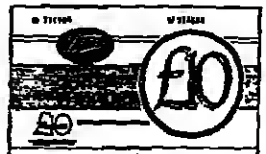
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Scrip alternative pays handsome dividends

A payout option that is aimed at boosting company cash flows is a gift for investors, says Liz Dolan

MORE than 500,000 shareholders in six big UK companies could be seriously out of pocket if they fail to read, or understand, details of a new dividend payment system.

This week, Forte and Redland joined Coats Vytella, BAT Industries, RTZ and Ladbroke in offering shareholders the new method of payment, dauntingly entitled the "enhanced scrip dividend alternative". As with a conventional scrip dividend scheme, this offers shareholders the choice of receiving dividends either in cash or in shares.

Where a conventional scheme offers cash and shares of equal value, however, the cash dividend under the enhanced scheme is only two-thirds the value of that paid in shares.

The aim is to persuade as many shareholders as possible to choose shares, so that the companies can save on tax and use the cash for other purposes. As an added incentive, shareholders who choose

shares may immediately sell them under a buy-back scheme at a price fixed at roughly 95 per cent of the issue price. This is particularly useful to small shareholders, who could otherwise see the advantages of choosing shares over cash eaten away in stockbrokers' dealing charges. Barclays de Zoete Wedd, the broker, operates the buy-back schemes for all except Ladbroke, which uses Smith New Court, its own broker.

It is obviously foolish for anyone to choose the cash alternative, when they will receive almost half as much cash again if they opt for the shares and then sell them, either through the buy-back scheme or in the market. But there is a danger that many shareholders will fall either to waste through the literature advising them of the alternatives, or to understand what they read.

Help lines are being established to answer shareholders' questions. Those already up



View from the top: "We can only hope people make sensible choices," says Michael Perry, of Barclays de Zoete Wedd

and running have uncovered a worrying lack of understanding about basic concepts. "For instance, quite a few people have asked what a dividend was," said Michael Perry, of BZW's corporate finance de-

partment. "We can't advise them one way or another, of course. We simply point out the features of the various alternatives and hope they make a sensible choice." Norman Brown, of Smith New

Court, said: "Everyone has different reasons for making the choices they do. The important thing is to do something, because you will seriously lose out if you don't." Shareholders will receive three

forms. The first should be completed by those who already receive dividend payments in the form of shares and wish to continue doing so; the second is for those who formerly took the cash but

because of the higher value of the new offer, now wish to receive shares; the third is for those who also want to take advantage of the buy-back scheme for all, or part, of their holding. Shareholders who do nothing will automatically receive cash.

The forms must be completed and returned within 14 working days of receipt. RTZ's forms, for instance, were sent out on the Wednesday before

Easter and must be in the company's hands by April 30. Coats Vytella's forms were sent out at the beginning of this week and BAT's are due to be posted on Monday. Ladbroke's shareholders should receive their forms "some time in mid-May", Mr Brown said. A decision has not been made yet about whether a help line will be provided.

Capital gains tax implications vary considerably, depending on the individual's tax position. Shareholders who have not yet used up their £5,800 annual exemption, or have offsetting tax losses, may

not have to pay any tax on the sale of scrip dividends. Those with CGT liabilities will have to pay tax upfront on sales, but could benefit later from the effect this will have on the value of their underlying holdings. The new shares are added to existing portfolios at their market value on the first day of dealings, said Mr Perry. Selling the scrip shares at market value accelerates recognition of a small part of

'A worrying lack of understanding of basic concepts — a few people asked what a dividend is'

the underlying capital gain on the original portfolios. So CGT costs depend on the original acquisition dates and prices. Capital gains on sales are mirrored by

decreases in the latent capital gains on the residual holdings, which may mean less tax to pay when the underlying shares are eventually sold. The new scheme is basically a tax avoidance device for companies that pay virtually no tax on UK earnings, or have substantial foreign earnings. They have little or nothing to offset against the tax they would have to pay on cash dividends.

Pearl's wisdom finds buyers lack confidence

CONSUMER confidence in the stock market has risen sharply for the first time this year, but fewer people plan to follow up their confidence in April and invest in shares. These seemingly contradictory discoveries were made by two separate monthly surveys published by Pearl Assurance this week (Liz Dolan writes).

Pearl's investor confidence index for April reports that confidence in the stock market rose 6.34 per cent between March and April, while the company's consumer-investment index shows that intentions to invest in shares fell 26 per cent over the same period.

Martin Fox, Pearl's market-

ing manager, said: "The question is, they may be more confident, but have they got the money to invest at the moment?"

The survey was carried out in the last few days of the financial year. This may explain another apparent discrepancy in the findings: that although general equity investment is likely to have slumped this month, 10 per cent more is expected to be invested in Peps (personal equity plans).

Also, intentions to buy Tassas (tax-exempt special savings schemes) rose 26 per cent, another pointer that investors are favouring savings plans with tax incentives.

In addition, although general consumer confidence is suddenly higher, company directors have shown a 4.5-point decrease in confidence. Mr Fox said: "Maybe they've suddenly started to feel frustrated about how long the recovery is taking."

Pearl's investment index, which records the intentions of 2,000 people likely to invest in Tassas, Peps, unit trusts, investment bonds and building-society accounts, registered its first fall since it started in January this year — down 138 points to 2,438.

Mr Fox said: "Consumers appear to be cautious and will need clearer signs of recovery before committing themselves to further investments."

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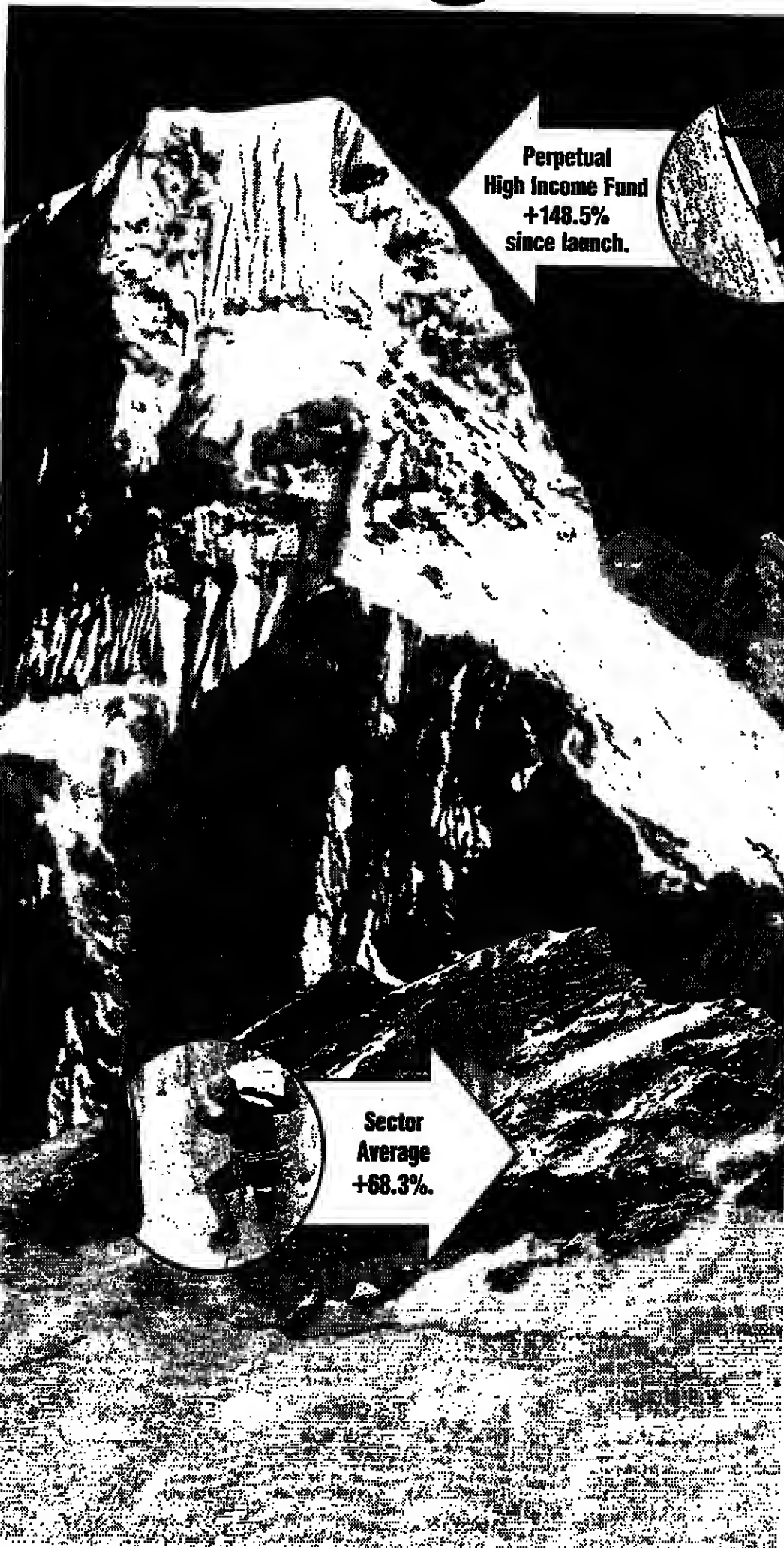
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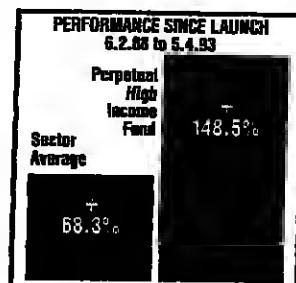
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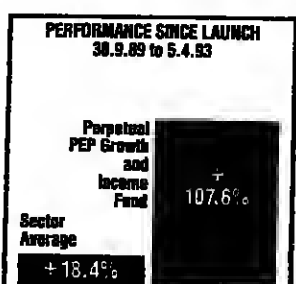
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LETTERS

Insurance at danger money rates

From Mr C. E. Miller

Sir, Following the article by Lindsay Cook (April 10) about the rise in home contents insurance, I thought you might be interested in my case, where the premium has not only hit the roof, but gone through it. At present, I pay £151.00 per annum. The new quote is for £273.00, which is an increase of just over 80 per cent. Legal and General apparently have had "no alternative but to increase our rates in line with the rest of the market". According to your article, Legal and General have only increased "by an average of 12 per cent, although some premiums went up by 40 per cent".

It could, therefore, be thought that we must live in an extremely high risk area, where burglary is an everyday occurrence. Or maybe that we live next to an MoD bomb test site. However, as far as I am aware, the majority of criminals reside in one of the three

of HM Prisons on the island. With regard to bombs, the main probability must be the Montgomery — a ship laden with explosives which is at present sitting off a sandbank off the coast of Sheerness, where it has been since WWII. With regard to our own insurance claims, over the last ten years, our total claims have not totalled more than £150. Perhaps Legal and General should take a closer look at their insurance premium rises before giving inaccurate details of the highest rises to your Money Editor.

Finally, I feel that it is unfair to "punish" those of us who are, in the main, conscientious householders who take all steps to minimise claims, in the hope that premiums will be kept low. Yours faithfully, C. E. MILLER, 2 Newcomen Road, Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.



Heavy penalty for ceasing Royal Life payments

From Mr Brian E. Foreman

Sir, I have been following the correspondence in your columns regarding the actions of various private pension providers but have not seen my problem mentioned.

Like millions of others, I was made redundant. This forced me to stop payments into my private pension with Royal Life.

Royal Life imposed a penalty on the capital I had paid in and confiscated 32.29 per cent of my investments. Royal Life claim this is necessary: a) to recoup the initial commission paid (nil in my case), and b) to recoup the setting up and administration of the policy.

I negotiated my private pension direct with Royal Life, and my agreement with Royal Life was subject to no commission being paid — as no advisers or agents were involved.

Royal Life have regularly deducted approximately 6 per cent each month from my monthly contribution for "administration charges".

During the short life of the pension policy, I managed to increase payments on a voluntary basis. Royal Life state they

will credit 90 per cent of the penalty if I re-start payments before my next birthday at the rate of the contribution at the time I ceased payment (former rate).

Royal Life refuse to take into consideration that I voluntarily increased payments to the former rate, and will not allow credit at the 90 per cent rate if I only contribute at the original contract rate (this is assuming I find new employment).

As the government has been encouraging individuals to build their own private pensions, I feel it is time they took a close look at the private pension industry and regulated against what I consider to be theft of pension funds when redundancy forces contributions to cease.

Yours faithfully, BRIAN E. FOREMAN, 2 Brewery Yard, Gunton Hall, Hanworth, Norwich.

Royal Life has subsequently reviewed this case and is in the process of making a revised offer, which will mean a substantial reduction in the penalty.

Comment, page 23

Expensive repairs must increase premiums

From Mr Stanley Willett

Sir, Terry Parradine's insurance problem (March 27) follows similar banking complaints and we all suffer higher premiums after big claims. Thus I was surprised when a neighbour had an accident and got a quote from a good local garage only to be told by his insurer to use a main agent at twice the cost, which was now usual. There must be a reason for this, but I have found it is not always best using a main dealer, and wonder if this raises premiums. Yours sincerely, STANLEY WILLETT, 23 Corbridge Road, Liverpool.

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Dull end to account

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings ended March 29. Dealings ended yesterday. 8Contango day Monday. Settlement day April 26. 8Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days. Prices recorded at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous days close, but adjustments are made when a stock is re-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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Portfolio Plus

From your Portfolio Plus card check your eight share price movements on this page. Add them up to give you your overall dividend figure. If it matches the money stated, if you follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

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Saturday portrait: Liz McColgan, by David Powell, athletics correspondent

Confident and brash but born to run and bred for success

Liz McColgan, one-time jute mill worker living on a Dundee council estate, has a letter of congratulations from former President Reagan. "She probably wouldn't remember it," Peter McColgan, her husband, says. So much achieved, so much more to accomplish, that correspondence from the White House is forgotten like last week's training schedule.

An invitation from Buckingham Palace makes little impression, either. McColgan was asked to London to collect her MBE. "Too busy training," came the reply. One date was rejected, then another, and another, until, finally, a year later, she found the time. "I suppose anyone else would have said 'I'll not do that run' and have gone," Peter said. But Liz McColgan is as focused as any sportsman or woman on earth.

She has been since she was 14, when she took a part-time job in a chip shop for two years to buy kit and pay for travel to competition. At 15, she skipped school exams to race. "I was studying for six then a race came up," she said. "I asked if I could take them later but my teachers told me 'no'. I went to the race instead of sitting the exams. Even then, my running was everything to me. I left school without any qualifications."

At 16, she ran in half-marathons, breaking the sports rules. You have to be 18 to race that far. Then, at 26, she trained in a blizzard 12 days after giving birth. "The pain from the stitches was unbearable, but I wanted to get into shape as soon as possible."

And how she succeeded. Within a year, McColgan was the world champion at 10,000 metres, winner of the New York Marathon, world cross-country bronze medal winner and BBC Sports Personality of the Year. That was 1991. In 1992, she set a half-marathon world best, won the world title at that distance and the Tokyo Marathon.

Tomorrow, she is the joint favourite, with Lisa Ondieki, of Australia, to win the NutraSweet London Marathon. Ondieki calls her "the most brash, confident person I have ever met." Why? "Because she talks big about times

and world records," McColgan denies she is arrogant. "I'm just being honest. I say the truth."

McColgan, 28, has never been the retiring type. "A real tomboy" is how her mother, Betty Lynch, remembers the schoolgirl. "Always up trees". Now she finds money growing on them. McColgan will be a millionaire before long and has bought a stone-built nineteenth century house in Carnoustie, with seven acres, walled perimeter and separate cottage.

Tomorrow's exercise, with appearance money, prize money and bonus money, could bring in excess of £200,000. In addition, she is paid well to wear the Japanese sports clothing in which you will see her competing. Not only does the marathon pay win money and bonuses for records but so does her sponsor.

'She obliterated the finest women's line-up ever assembled at the distance, grinding it out from the front, the rest hanging on by their fingertips'

The whispers behind her back are that she is motivated by money. Dark were the looks from around the room when, at her 10,000 metres world gold medal press conference in Tokyo, she pleaded poverty through lack of sponsorship. But, fond of money though she is, she is not mesmerised by it. She could have run in the London Marathon last year and earned a six-figure sum but concentrated on preparing for the Olympics instead.

"If I was in it for the money, I would not be running Olympics and championship races," she said. "I make most of my money out of road races and, if I was motivated by money, I would be doing track races. I would be in America where the regular money is doing every road race I could."

No arguments, though, that the pay has not been welcome. Her mother was a barmaid, her father

an unemployed labourer for much of her growing years. Tayside could offer the teenage Liz Lynch no more than a YTS job in a jute mill. "Weaving, putting spools on machines," she recalls. "It was pretty boring. If it was not for athletics, I would still be working in the mill, if I was lucky. More likely I would be unemployed."

At home, she shared a bedroom with her sister but, being one of four children, there were few treats. "I had a healthy and happy family background, but the upbringing made me tougher and more determined," she said.

McColgan's interest in athletics began at 11 and, in her first serious race, a Dundee Schools championship, she carried on running beyond the finish. The line was not well marked and she wanted to make sure.

She joined the Dundee Hawkhill club but, for many years, there was little indication of the formidable athlete to come. Even by 20, she was not much better than club standard, ranking 63rd in Britain at 3,000 metres. Unexpectedly, she received a phonecall from the American university system: she declined their offer but, persuaded by her parents and coach, changed her mind.

Her years at the University of Alabama were, she says now, the making of her. By 21, she was third at 3,000 metres in Britain and, by 22, Commonwealth 10,000 metres champion. The letter from Reagan came after she was the main contributor to her university winning the NCAA overall indoor title.

However, as her competitive reputation grew, so it became obvious that she was not the complete athlete. She was a box of chocolates with the best sweets missing: she had no finishing kick.

She led the 1987 world cross-country until the last kilometre, where she was outstripped by Olga Bondarenko for the Olympic 10,000 metres title and, in 1989, did most of the work in the world indoor 3,000 metres championship only for Elyse Hulse to pass and leave her second again.

It was with some relief that 1990 brought the Commonwealth Games and McColgan could be a winner again. The opposition was weak. McColgan retained her 10,000 metres title, then had a year out of competition while she had her first child, Eilish.

She earned nothing from racing for 19 months and her shoe sponsor dropped her. What was the point in clothing that could not kick? But the McColgan psyche was now at its toughest. All she had to do was get fit enough to



ILLUSTRATION: STEVE MARTIN

run the legs off the opposition so no sprint would be needed. On a humid night in Tokyo at the world championships two summers ago, she did precisely that. She obliterated the finest women's line-up ever assembled at the distance, grinding it out from the front, the rest hanging on by their fingertips until, one by one, they lost grip.

"She looked like a tank at a destruction derby," Frank Dick, Britain's chief coach, observed. Though she achieved much on

the roads last year, she could manage only fifth in the Olympic 10,000 metres. But she refuses to accept that, because she lacks a kick, she should turn to the marathon as her championship event. "I will not move up to the marathon until I have fulfilled my potential at 10,000 metres, and I have not done that yet," she said.

By that she means breaking Ingrid Kristiansen's 10,000 metres world record. And she does not doubt that, sooner or later, she

will improve the Norwegian's marathon world best of 2hr 21min 06sec. "I think that one day I will be able to break 2:20."

If she does, her shoe sponsor will not mind she had to use two pairs to do it. Her feet differ in size: one is a 7, the other an 8. Long gone are the days in Dundee when she could afford only one pair, running with one shoe pinching her toes. You might have guessed then that there was a girl born to success by her determination.

Leading contenders feel benefits of labour day

SINCE pregnancy, apparently, improves athletic performance after childbirth, it is no surprise that the women most likely to occupy the first three places in the NutraSweet London Marathon tomorrow are mothers: Liz McColgan, Lisa Ondieki and Karin Dore. So, for that matter, is Andrea Wallace, the next best Briton after McColgan. Ingrid Kristiansen, holder of the fastest time in the world by a woman, set in London eight years ago, improved markedly after becoming a mother.

"Pregnancy is associated with an increase in blood volume that would help the endurance competitor," Dr Craig Sharp, a leading physiologist, said. Once the initial help has worn off, the athletes benefit from having moved onto a higher platform of training, Sharp adds. McColgan, Ondieki, Dore and Wallace have all improved since having children, but there is something else in the medical cases of the leading two women which is harder to explain.

Why, when thousands of entrants will not even make it to the start tomorrow because of aches and pains, has neither McColgan nor Ondieki ever suffered a training injury? These are the high mileage athletes, running close to 100 a week.

Two years ago, Ondieki slipped on spilt milk on her kitchen floor and missed the

David Powell on how motherhood can play a significant part in improving the times of endurance athletes

world championships. McColgan once broke a kneecap when she tripped on a tree stump. But both say they have never been stopped by an injury brought on by running. Yet medical opinion suggests that women are more likely to be injured than men.

"Women tend to suffer more knee pain because their hips are wider, which puts more stress on the knee," Rose McDonald, the London Marathon's chief physiotherapist, said. Sharp says that women distance runners are



Ondieki: sensible

more vulnerable, too, to stress fractures.

"Of women athletes who exercise strenuously for more than 15 hours a week, perhaps 50 per cent or more will not be menstruating," Sharp said. The effect is a thinning of the bone and greater susceptibility to stress fractures.

According to Leslie Watson, a physiotherapist and former international marathon runner, Ondieki and McColgan avoid one of the most common injuries, sciatica, because of the type of workouts they do. "Their training is high quality and the danger is in doing long, slow runs when you are

aching," Watson said. "I am more surprised that Liz has not had an injury because she looks more laboured than Lisa. John Anderson, her former coach, used to think that she did not get injured because a lot of injuries are in the mind and she was so strong-willed she would not allow herself to be injured. Lisa's style is fantastic. She is very straight and always looks easy and flowing."

Dr Dan Tunstall Peck, the medical director of the London Marathon, says that, proportionately according to the numbers of each sex taking part, more men than women run into trouble during the race. Ondieki says that "women are more sensible, look after themselves and listen to their bodies". Especially the mothers.

Hill hoping her turn has come

By Alex Ramsay

AFTER three years as the runner-up, Rose Hill is determined to cast off her image as the perpetual Cinderella and finally go to the ball by winning the wheelchair section of the London Marathon. Last year, with a mile to go, it appeared that her ambitions were about to be realised. Then, Tanni Grey, the Paralympic sprint champion, pulled out of Hill's wake, and beat her to the line. "Every time I look back at that race, I cringe," Hill said. "I was so slow I looked as though I needed winding up. It was embarrassing."

Hill's chances were not

helped by a preparation limited by a severe chest infection. But, being Paralympic year, she had to compete to secure her place in Barcelona.

Since last year, Hill has become fitter, faster and leaner — by two stone — after teaming up with the 1985 and 1987 champion, Chris Hallam. His coaching has worked well so far, with Hill finishing two places ahead of Gray in a 15km road race in Florida in February, setting a new British record.

Hill hopes to take advantage of the presence of the German marathon specialist, Lily Angreny. "I hope that

Lily and I can drop Tanni in the first 13 miles," she said. "We can't afford to have her there at the finish with her sprinting speed."

The British men will be led by the 1989 champion, David Holding. When he took the title, he was the first man to break the two-hour barrier; now more than half the 61-strong field will expect to beat that time.

To give an added edge to the competition, a prize-money fund has been set up with £1,000 going to the men's and women's champion, and £500 to the two runners-up.

Phil Yates surveys contenders for the world snooker crown

Davis sets sights on seventh title

MARK Twain, who loved billiards, would have sympathised. Reports of another's demise have been greatly exaggerated and even the game's harshest critics would have difficulty in describing the Embassy world championship, which begins in Sheffield today, as a wake.

The 17-day marathon, which has unfolded annually at the Crucible Theatre since 1977, carries a prize fund of £1 million, which could rise to £1.1 million if anyone can emulate the 147 maximum break Jimmy White compiled last year.

A cheque for £175,000 awaits the winner on May 3 while the runner-up will be consoled to the tune of £105,000 — £15,000 more than Nick Faldo received for winning the Open Championship at Muirfield last year. Prize-money levels may not tell the whole story but they are a solid indicator of the game's continuing prosperity.

Another is healthy television viewing figures. The honey-moon period of the mid-Eighties, which included a remarkable BBC2 audience of 18.5 million at 12.23am to see Dennis Taylor beat Steve Davis 18-17 on the black in the 1985 world final, is unquestionably over.

Yet a recent survey conducted by ACE Sporting Profiles/BARS suggests that snooker, and particularly the world championship, is still highly popular. In 1992, viewing figures for the world final peaked at 11.6 million, with the average audience for the four-session, two-day match being 8.8 million. Compare that with 8.1 million for the

EMBASSY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DRAW				
FIRST ROUND	SECOND ROUND	QUARTER-FINALS	SEMI-FINALS	FINAL
Stephen Hendry (1)				
Danny Fowler				
Darren Morgan (16)				
Lee Dood				
Nigel Bond (9)				
Spencer Dunn				
Gary Wilkinson (8)				
Dean Reynolds				
Neil Foulds (5)				
Brian Morgan				
Martin Clark (12)				
Karl Payne				
Alan McManus (13)				
Ronnie O'Sullivan				
Steve Davis (4)				
Peter Ebdon				
Jimmy White (3)				
Joe Swail				
Alan Roddick (14)				
Doug Mountjoy				
Dennis Taylor (11)				
Tony Drago				
Tony Dunning (6)				
David Roe				
James Wattana (7)				
Tony Jones				
Steve James (10)				
John Giles				
Willie Thorne (15)				
Shaun Meah				
John Parrott (2)				
Stephen O'Connor				

British grand prix. 5.5 million for the Cricket World Cup final and 4.3 million for the Open. With such rich rewards on offer, and a field that provides an intriguing blend of youth and experience, plus the strong possibility of Steve Davis capturing the title for a seventh time, there seems little doubt that this year's championship will again excite the interest of the nation.

Since equalling Ray Reardon's modern record of six world championship wins in 1989, Davis has, for the most part, been a perfectionist in purgatory. He failed to win a ranking tournament for 27 months after prevailing in the 1989 Rothmans grand prix.

Dunn's best finish in the first seven events was to reach the last 192 of the Rothmans grand prix. He had one last chance to salvage something from the season and seized it, negotiating ten world championship qualifying matches.

Before beating Mark Bennett, the world No. 27, 10-9 to guarantee his place at the Crucible, he recorded a 10-7 victory over Dave Harold, who captured the Asian Open title in Bangkok last month.

Dunn still plays in his local league, albeit with a premier division team, and is sure of £8,000 even if he loses to Nigel Bond, the world No. 9, in the first round at Sheffield.

Last year's world championship found him at what was possibly his lowest ebb. He was beaten 10-4 in the opening round by Peter Ebdon, a first-season professional who, coincidentally, again provides Davis with his initial opposition. That defeat stung Davis more than any other. Every

aspect of his cue action came in for analysis and, gradually, the benefits of a suburban refusal to accept that he was in decline began to show.

The turning point came at the European Open in Antwerp in February. Davis produced his most impressive display for four years to beat his great rival, Stephen Hendry, 10-4 in the final.

His recovery continued two weeks later in the British Open before Davis further enhanced his fast-growing confidence by winning the Benson and Hedges Irish Masters for the seventh time.

"I think I've got a realistic chance of winning the championship now," he said. "I'm comfortable at the table and I'm winning in style."

The bookmakers have been unanimous in installing Hendry, the defending champion, as favourite. The Scot, after a barren period, appears to have struck peak form at precisely the right time.

In last week's Sky Sports International Open in Plymouth, where he beat Davis 10-6 in a psychologically important final, he compiled a record ten century breaks.

The strength of the challenge from John Parrott, the world No. 2, and White, seeded three, will depend on their ability to bounce back from a sequence of disappointing results.

Notable absentees from the final stages of this year's championship include Ken Doherty, winner of the Regal Welsh Open in January, and the former champions, Joe Johnson (1986), Alex Higgins (1972 and 1982) and Cliff Thorburn (1980).

It is a huge sum for a player whose previous highest remuneration from snooker was £250 from a pro-am in 1991. He is determined to prove his qualification was no fluke. "If my game's in shape, I can beat anyone," he said. "I qualified in September and I can't remember a night since when I haven't thought about Sheffield. It always enters my head just before I go to sleep."

Officials dismiss fears of Aintree-style muddle

By DAVID POWELL
ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

THE thirteenth London Marathon tomorrow will be unlucky for some but not for Sir Ranulph and Lady Virginia Fiennes, official starters. The assurance comes from Chris Brasher, the race founder. False start? "There will not be one," Brasher said yesterday.

The Grand National is not alone as a big sporting event to have suffered a false start. In the United States last November the New York Marathon, with 28,000 participants on three starting lines, was left blushing when the men at the Blue Start

jumped the traditional cannon shot. Others waited patiently for the true send-off 55 seconds later.

"We have been through the start procedure in extremely fine detail this week," Brasher said. "We have built up a lot of experience, culminating in the World Cup in 1991."

"I have talked to jockeys who were in the National and a big fault is that they were on the line. Our people are not on the line, they are brought up to it. Anyone fool enough to try to gain one second in a race lasting 2hr 8min will be disqualified."

Again this year the elite women will be given a start, so their race can be seen

separately instead of being swallowed up in the men's. Last year 20 minutes was barely enough and Katrina Dore, the women's winner, was almost caught by Antonio Pinto, the men's victor.

This year the difference is 25 minutes and, with Liz McColgan, of Britain, and Lisa Ondieki, of Australia, both saying they have never felt fitter, it should be plenty to see the winner over Westminster Bridge before the men come out of The Mall and enter the last mile.

Though vision is blurred beyond seeing anyone other than Ondieki or McColgan winning, there is just the chance they could be the

undoing of each other. "I am not going to run a slow, tactical race," Ondieki said. Nor will McColgan.

Perhaps they will blow each other out and, if they do, any one of four others might win: Dore (Germany), Lorraine Moller (New Zealand), Renata Kowalska (Poland) or Andrea Wallace (Britain).

Ondieki and McColgan are both champions from the last two Commonwealth Games. McColgan, whose victories came at 10,000 metres, is now training on Ondieki's patch. She has a firm footing already, beating Ondieki when winning New York in her first marathon two years ago. She then won her second, in Tokyo last year, and approaches her third with an unbeaten record.

However, Ondieki, has a best time of nearly four minutes quicker, 2hr 23min.

Full results of the Nutra-Sweet London Marathon will be published exclusively in *The Times* throughout next week from Monday.

51sec to the Scot's 2:27:32. She won New York five months ago and ran her quickest ten miles recently. If the weather cooperates she expects to be inside 2:24. Ondieki insisted there

should be no pacemaker and David Bedford, the international race director, agreed. "A confrontation like this does not need a pacemaker," Bedford said.

But there will be for the men's race. Mike O'Reilly, fifth in 1990, knows the course and will take the leaders through halfway in 64 minutes. There is a good chance he will be paving the way for a British victory.

Three Olympic Games have gone by since an Englishman won and, in Paul Evans, hopes are high that he will be the first since Charlie Spedding in 1984. A Welshman, Steve Jones, won in 1985 and a Scot, Allister

Humon, in 1990 but British wins are rare these days.

However, the home entry is stronger than in recent years and half a dozen others, on their day, might succeed if Evans fails. Steve Brace, Paul Davies-Hale, Dave Long, Eamonn Martin, and Carl Thackeray. The best of the overseas contenders are Ahmed Salah (Djibouti), Salvador Garcia and Isidro Rico (Mexico), and a group of South Africans.

The incentive for the home runners does not stop at lidos and prize-money. The leading Briton other than Evans, who has been selected already, will most likely be chosen for the last remaining

place in Britain's world championship team (there is a women's place still available, too).

For others who are prominent there is the World Cup in October and fast times now might also count towards European championships and Commonwealth Games selection next year. Because the European championships incorporate the European Cup there will now be six places available instead of the traditional three, plus nine at the Commonwealth Games.

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City living on knife-edge after £50,000 fine by FA

By KEITH PIKE

MANCHESTER City were yesterday fined £50,000 and ordered to play one match behind closed doors after a Football Association enquiry into the pitch invasion that disrupted their FA Cup quarter-final against Tottenham Hotspur at Maine Road last month. Both punishments were suspended until the end of next season.

The club was also ordered to pay the costs of the four-man commission, but Peter Swales, the Manchester City chairman, dismissed claims that it had been treated leniently. Swales, who is also chairman of the FA's international committee, said: "We are living on a knife-edge now. You might think that £50,000 is not all that frightening, but a game behind closed doors is. That could cost us a quarter of a million pounds if it affects a big match."

"One season is a long time. It's something like 30 occasions and we must make sure there is no repeat. It is the first pitch invasion here since 1979 and we've had nobody on the pitch in 14 years. I'm anxious this record continues."

Millions of television viewers saw mounted police intervene after about 200 City supporters, with their side losing 4-2, went on to the pitch on March 7, running towards the Tottenham supporters and engaging in fights. Play was held up for 12 minutes and 20 arrests were made.

In 1988, Chelsea were fined a record £75,000 for serious crowd disturbances during a play-off game against Middlesbrough and, last year, Birmingham City were fined £50,000 and ordered to play two matches behind closed doors after trouble at their home match against Stoke City. In the latter case, the punishments were suspended.

Adrian Titcombe, the FA head of competitions and regulations, said that the Birmingham incident remained a benchmark for incidents of crowd disturbance. "The incident at Maine Road was far less serious," he said. "There was no aggressive action by most of the people on

the pitch." Titcombe said that the commission had taken into account City's previous good record and the prompt and positive actions of stewards and police.

Swales remains adamant that a return to perimeter fencing is not the answer. "We think fences are counter-productive, and I think that the FA and police agree with that," he said. Sixty supporters have already been banned from Maine Road for life and Swales said the hunt for the other offenders will continue.

While the commission was deliberating, the Football League was contemplating matters of a happier, if more complex, nature. A place in history beckons for Arsenal and Sheffield Wednesday, who meet in the Coca-Cola Cup final at Wembley tomorrow. So, too, does the extraordinary prospect of three appearances at the national stadium inside six days next month.

A League spokesman confirmed yesterday that Wembley was one of the venues being considered for a replay should this weekend's final fail to produce a winner after extra time. The date — Tuesday, May 18 — is only three days after the same teams meet in the FA Cup final.

Should the FA Cup final not be resolved at the first time of asking, the clubs, who also won their respective semi-finals at Wembley, would have to return there once again on Thursday, May 20.

With this weekend's match expected to generate record receipts for a League Cup final of £2.3 million, the stadium authorities are unlikely to be complaining. But replays or not, the teams — bidding for an unprecedented FA and League Cup double — will surely be sick of the sight of each other by the time the season ends.

They also meet in a rearranged Premier League fixture at Hillsborough on May 6, one of five each club must complete in the 11 days leading up to the FA Cup final.

Palmer's progress, page 35

Violence threatens venue for 1995 tournament



Fall guy: Christophe Deyland, of France, is tackled by Andrew Dujakovich, of the United States, on the opening day of the Rugby World Cup sevens at Murrayfield yesterday. France won the match 22-7, but lost 17-7 to Ireland, who lead pool B jointly with New Zealand. Photograph: Mike Hewitt/Allsport.

World Cup directors visit South Africa

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE tragic events in South Africa this week have provoked further concern about the staging of the Rugby World Cup (RWC) there in 1995. Yesterday, the four RWC directors said they would visit South Africa next month to assess the situation.

"We have to express concern and find the answers," Russ Thomas, who retires as chairman of RWC on July 31, said in Edinburgh.

"We have heads of agreement with the South African Rugby Football Union, we are now going through the various agreements, with a target

date for completion of June 30."

However, RWC admit to no contingency plans for moving the tournament, though Thomas said possible alternatives would be debated over the next week by the International Rugby Football Board, whose annual meeting coincides with the Rugby World Cup sevens in Edinburgh. Thomas's co-director from France, Marcel Martin, has even greater cause for concern at the volatile situation in South Africa, as the French are due to tour there in six weeks time. The Board

is unlikely to make any decision on the venue of the 1995 tournament until after next month's visit, although the uncertainty will have had implications for the commercial programme.

The draw for 1995 has been amended at the knock-out stage after protests, notably from Australia, that some of the strongest sides might meet in pool and semi-final matches and that others might miss one another altogether. The effect on England, for example, is that should they win their pool they are likely to meet France or

Scotland at the quarter-final stage rather than Ireland or Wales — which could be good news in view of this season's results.

It also opens the way for a quarter-final between New Zealand and South Africa; all of which is a far cry from the qualifying matches confirmed for this year, among them the first full international to be played by Latvia, who opened the sevens yesterday with a 42-0 defeat by Fiji, the favourites. Latvia will meet Germany in Riga on May 8.

Australia toppled, page 35

Matters of age confuse

AS I continue my surreal week at the world gymnastics championship here in Birmingham, my mind turns to Kim Zmeskal, of the United States, and I wonder what has happened to her: world champion two years ago, walking tall at 4ft 7in and aged just 15. She is not here semi-retired and apparently 1st heavier. Since she was 5ft 10in at her competitive peak, that is probably more of a relief than anything else.

And where, you may well ask, is Kim Gwang Suk, the North Korean who won the asymmetric bars in 1991. So brave, so tiny: she looked about nine, though she was allegedly 16.

But the following year, by the time of the Barcelona Olympics, her birthday had changed: from February 15,

1975, to February 15, 1976. Further enquiries revealed that the date of birth claimed for her at the world championships in 1989 was May 10, 1974. You must be in your fifteenth year to compete at the championships.

The Koreans now admit that she was too young to compete in the 1989 championships, but claim that she was really 17 at the Olympics. She is not in Birmingham for these championships: the International Gymnastics Federation got fed up with the mess and chucked her and her North Korean colleagues out. They will be back in 1994: will Kim have reached puberty by then?

Trying result

Do you ever get bored with those 0-0 draws? An Australian No Rules Football match brought Woodside, reigning champions of the Oatlands District Football Association, victory over Mount Pleasant 447-2. The coach, Dennis Sturaker, said: "We get beat, but the boys tried really hard."



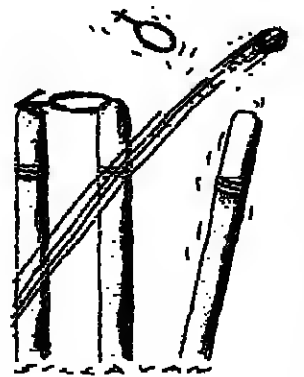
SIMON BARNES
Sporting diary

A bunch of lunatics — not ordinary lunatics but lunatics for the connoisseur — recently ran a half-marathon at Rothera, a research station near the South Pole. It was

organised by the British Antarctic Survey. They covered 13 miles around an airstrip: several wore snow-boots. Brian Hull won in 84 minutes.

Old wives' tale

"One thing that worries me about the coming tour is the wives factor," Dean Jones says. Though not selected for the Ashes tour this summer, the great Australian batsman is still giving Australia the benefit of his thoughts. "I do not want to offend anyone, but I am worried that the players' wives will be allowed to join the Ashes tour much earlier than in '89. The players have a job to do over there and I wonder if the wives' arrival might affect the team's play."



Fleeting fame

More on too-much-too-soon: as 25,000 people from the ranks of the insane commence the London Marathon tomorrow, they must do so without Yumi Kokano of Japan, who had one of the most brilliant and brief careers on record. Less than 18 months ago, she claimed world attention by running the fastest debut marathon ever: 2hr 26min 26sec, beating the mark set by Liz McColgan and winning the Osaka marathon.

Now she has retired, after a disappointing run in the Olympics (29th in just under three hours). Japanese athletes blame the pressure put on emerging stars by the companies they work for. Kokano worked for Daihatsu. Athletes say the companies are insensitive to the demands of distance running, wanting their protégés to run all the time to keep the company name before the television cameras. Television coverage of distance running is big-time stuff in Japan. The surrender of self to company

is part of Japanese life: in distance running, surrender of self to company means irreparable damage to soft tissue and competitive edge.

Window pain

Alas, we will not be seeing the ineffable talents of Faustino Asprilla on Wednesday in the second leg of the Cup Winners' Cup final. He scored the goal that allowed Parma to snap AC Milan's winning streak and scored two more in the first leg of the Cup Winners' Cup Final against Atletico Madrid in Madrid. Asprilla, a Colombian, recently paid a visit to his sick mother in Tulsa. But while there, he got a horrific leg injury. An anonymous witness (most witnesses are anonymous in Medellin) has said that she saw Asprilla riding the streets on the bumper of a car. He got into an altercation with a bus-driver and started to kick out the bus windows, giving himself a horrible cut. A 90-minute operation put him back together: but he is out for the rest of the season, at least.

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SNOOKER 34

AVIS SETS SIGHTS
ON SEVENTH
WORLD TITLE

iddle

place in Britain's world
championship team (there is a
women's place still available,
too).
For others who are pre-
mier there is the World Cup in
October and fast times now
might also count towards
European championships and
Commonwealth Games
selection next year. Because
the European championship
incorporate the European
Cup there will now be 20
places available instead of the
traditional three, plus nine at
the Commonwealth Games.

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ament



COUNTS ED FLIGHTS



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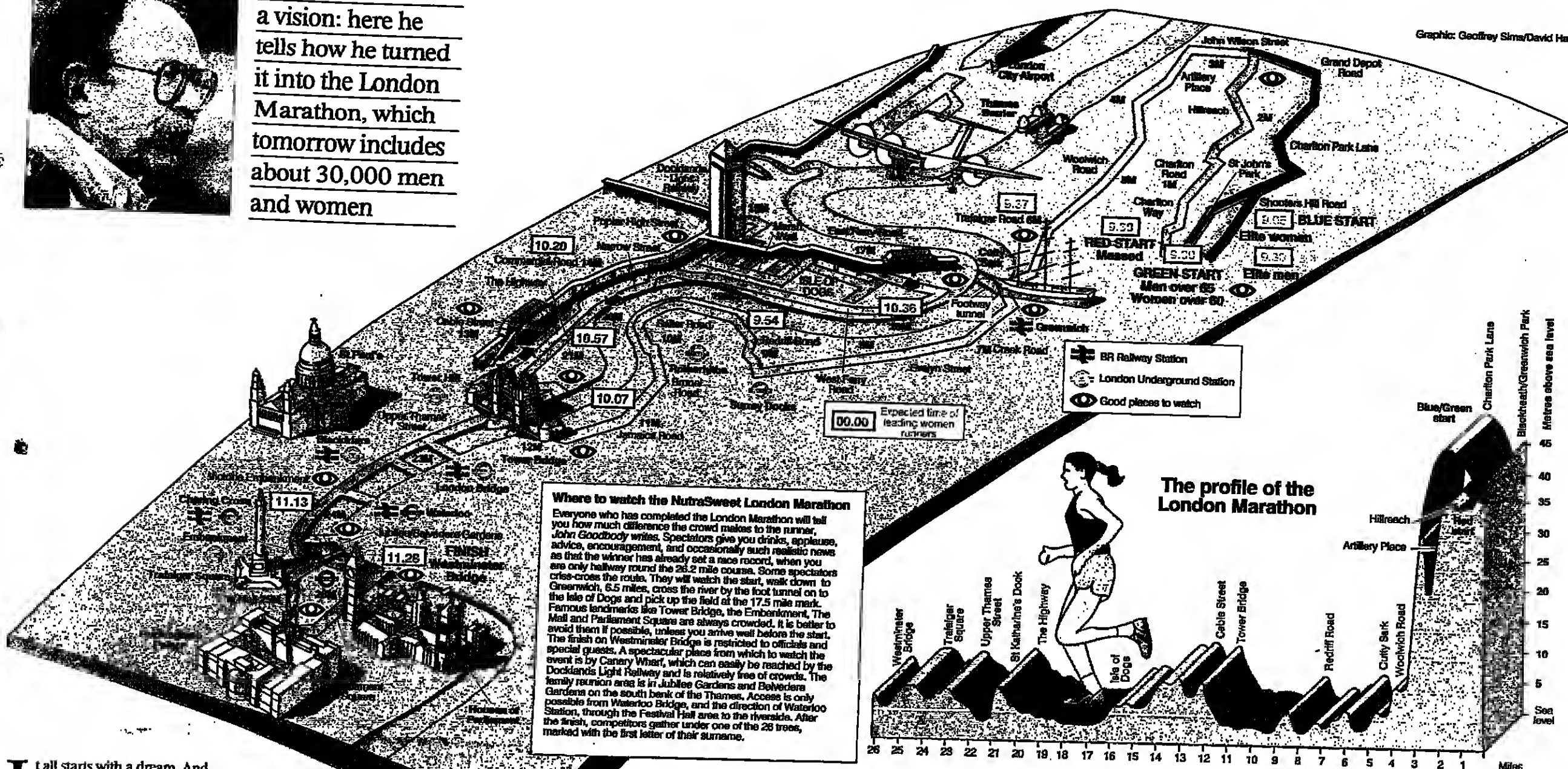
THE TIMES SATURDAY APRIL 17 1993

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Running the outrageous dream



Chris Brasher had
a vision: here he
tells how he turned
it into the London
Marathon, which
tomorrow includes
about 30,000 men
and women



It all starts with a dream. And we British are among the best dreamers in the world. In fact, we are the best dreamers.

For months past, through rain, through frost, through the chill of a British winter, thousands of so-called ordinary people — men and women of every shape, size and age (many of them the wrong shape, size and age) — have dreamt an outrageous dream: that they would run 26 miles and 385 yards from Greenwich to Westminster Bridge. It will hurt. And many of those who do it again they will, for as Browning wrote:

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?"

Heaven seemed a little too close for the organisers of the marathon the year that the 81-year-old president of Kidder Peabody, a top Wall Street broker and financier, turned up to race complete with a Mexican minder carrying a portable resuscitation kit. He was determined to do the marathon. He did it too, in style, and the moment he crossed the line he requested a cab to take him to his hotel. Heaven, for many of the 30,000

eccentrics who will line up on the Greenwich Meridian tomorrow at the start of the NutraSweet London Marathon, will be to tell their children that their dream has come true: that they ran in a race, a famous race on television, and beat Sebastian Coe, the only man in history to win the Olympic 1,500m gold medal in two successive Games. And since Coe says that he expects to complete the course in about 3½ hours, there will be 3,000 men and 100 or more women who can claim, tomorrow night, that they beat the great Sebastian Coe.

No other event can offer the ordinary man, the ordinary woman the privilege of competing in the same event, on the same course, on the same day as the greats of sport. Imagine the umpire on the Centre Court at Wimbledon announcing: "Ladies and gentlemen, there are only two players in this arena. Would 30,000 of you like to come down and join in?"

No other event in sport can offer the participants the satisfaction of saying: "I was there. I was in the race when Ingrid Kristiansen

broke the world record. I was there the day when a woman ran faster than the legendary Zatopek. I was there when Ingrid said 'nonsense' in Norwegian to all those men who said that women could not and should not be allowed to subject themselves to the marathon."

This week one of Ingrid's contemporaries, the delightful New Zealander Lorraine Moller, declared: "No, we are not a bunch of crazy women running in their underwear through the streets of London!" Now Kristiansen and Moller and the newest heroine, Liz McColgan, have released the bonds that bound women to men's narrow, blinkered concepts, and allowed the sensible sex to share the outrageous dream.

For some it may be the dream of raising a fortune — not for themselves, but for the cause which is closest to their heart. The letters pour in: "My daughter died of

leukaemia at the age of six. I want to run to raise money for the hospital that gave her such loving care." Think of a cause, and there will be somebody running in aid of it. No other nation in the world is so wholehearted, so dedicated to subjecting itself to all sorts of trials and tribulations in aid of charity as Britain. No other nation has ever produced a man like Roger Gibbs who, when well into his fifties, decided that he wanted to repay his debt to Cancer Research. And so he did. In 1982 he ran the London Marathon in under five hours and raised £440,000 — enough to buy a body scanner for Guy's.

For some it is a dream of becoming part of a legend, the legend of Pheidippides, who is reported to have run from Marathon to Athens, a distance of about 25 miles, to proclaim the Athenian victory over the Spartans before dropping dead. It is not true. But no matter — it was a British romantic poet who embroidered that legend, and who am I to quarrel with him? But if the distance from Marathon to Athens is about 25 miles, why will everybody be running 26 miles and 385 yards tomorrow? Because the British royal family so commanded. (The Olympic Marathons of 1896,

1900 and 1904 were all run over a distance of about 25 miles. So was the British trial for the 1908 Olympics. But the Princess of Wales intervened. Knowing that her parents-in-law, Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, were going to be at the finish of the 1908 Olympic Marathon, she thought it would be pleasant if she and the royal children could watch the start.

So the start, scheduled to be at Eton High Street, was extended over the Thames, up the hill, around Windsor Castle and on to the east lawn — a distance of 26 miles and 385 yards from the finishing line in front of the King and Queen in the White City Stadium.

That extra mile and a bit is causing me some concern for 1994 and beyond. This is the last year that we can use the greatest finish in the world — Westminster Bridge, with its backdrop of Big Ben. I often wonder what that image is worth to our tourism industry when it is transmitted to 30 countries around the world — including a three-hour live programme in Japan.

But we lose it next year because Westminster Bridge is falling down. We have suggested alterna-

tives to the Ministry of National Heritage and they are helpful and sympathetic, but I am scared that just one palace pen-pusher could kill the whole towering, crazy, delightful festival.

Because that is what it is. It has a life of its own — a lusty and completely dishevelled life which grew out of a late-night dream. Well, all dreams come late at night, don't they? This one started just after an October midnight in 1979 when I sat at my desk, whisky at hand, to write a column, and out of that night came an "over the top" article which spoke of "one joyous family, working together, laughing together, achieving the impossible."

I was describing the New York marathon: "Last Sunday, in one of the most violent, trouble-stricken cities in the world, 11,532 men and women from 40 countries in the world, assisted by more than a million black, white and yellow people, laughed and cheered and suffered during the greatest folk festival the world had seen..."

Now, with 12 London Marathons behind me, I am no longer apologetic about referring to "seeing a vision". We need visions, we need dreams and the more impossible they are, the better. Why? Because our reach must exceed our

grasp, "or what's a heaven for?" Maybe next year? For you? Yes, you can do it. I once sat in a bus on my way to the start of my first marathon in New York, and looked at my fellow passengers. They were all either too fat, far too fat, too old, or far too old. Yet they were contemplating it, and they did it, and so can you, because the human spirit is able to lift our frail bodies and our doubting minds into that stratosphere where anything is possible.

But, first, you must dream — you must dream that it is possible. And then when your dream comes true, as it will tomorrow for, about 25,000 men and women of all shapes, sizes and ages who will finish the race, you will experience a satisfaction that is seldom given to mere mortals — a satisfaction that is normally reserved for those who can create great music, great images, great poetry. It all starts with a dream.

Chris Brasher is chairman of the London Marathon Ltd board and a former Olympic gold medal winner. The results of the race will be published exclusively in The Times every finisher will be listed over three days, on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday next week.

Sporting life, page 10

Falsies that fill the cup of confidence

Why we construct the body beautiful from machine-made parts

Taking off her jumper, a girlfriend asked: "Why don't you write about confidence boosters? Like Gossard Wonder Bras?"

She had dropped in to stay the night en route, or rather off route, on a bumper-to-bumper drive towards London from Cornwall, where she had spent the weekend with her parents. When I say "girlfriend" I mean in the American sense, and not that I'm having an affair with her. The curiosity is that nobody else is either, and yet she is a raving beauty of 30 with proven cooking and designing skills and a famed sweetness of nature. She is just another YES girl (Young/Eligible/Single) in the social orbit of our world has not yet collided with the world of a compatible YES man. It is a modern phenomenon which I have commented on before.

"I hope you kept your passenger door sub down as you drove back," I told her, "to prevent stalkers getting in at crossroads."

"No, I didn't. I would almost welcome something like that," she joked. (Note to potential stalkers, she joked.)

We carried on about the confidence boosters. She had bought a pair of black Agnès B jeans in New York which, though I didn't see them, are apparently so great that people practically mob her each time she wears them. Then the figure-enhancing Wonder Bras. Since their reincarnation last year, Wonder Bras have been literally walking out of the stores that stock

them. Many women, having tried them on, cannot bear to change back into the bra they were wearing when they went into the shop.

It seems remarkable that Gossard has not brought out a range of similarly enhancing Wonder Pants for men. I'm sure they would go like hot cakes. I put the idea to a rag-trade person last year but he just laughed politely.

Artificial beauty aids have always been a speciality of mine. I named my own confidence boosters: a



WEEKEND
voice
MARY
KILLEN

particularly convincing pair of false eyelashes I purchased from theatrical make-up suppliers Screenface,

and, recently, a length of hair which previously belonged to my great-great-aunt, and which I have just brought down from the attic. Oddly — even though my own hair is artificially coloured — this hair is exactly the same colour. Through looping the length into a ponytail coming out of my natural head of hair, I look dramatically more attractive.

In the 1980s I had a sort of false bust in the form of a plastic breastplate, with ribbons that tied

at the waist. For some reason these were being sold in an off-licence named Hi-cups in Congleton, Cheshire, and I snapped one up. Worn under clothes it looked stunning: I looked like Daryl Hannah in *Blade Runner* or Jane Fonda in *Barbarella*, but only in photographs. The crackling noise was too loud when I wore it socially, and gave me away.

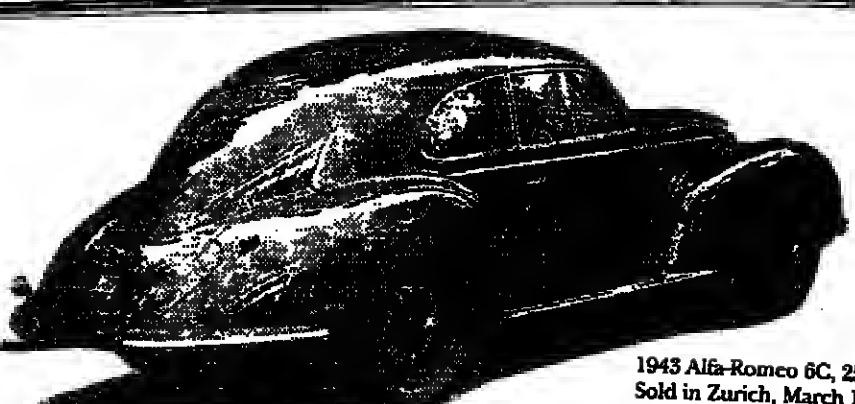
In the 1970s I even had a pair of false toe-nails. They were only ever available once — obviously they were test-marketed and then withdrawn through lack of consumer interest. I, however, was thrilled with them, but the girl with whom I shared a flat said she found them so

repulsive that I would have to move out unless I got rid of them.

Why is it that for me and my visiting friend, the only confidence boosters it occurred to us to discuss were our artificial aids to beauty rather than our actual "personal achievements"?

Well, personal achievements are so difficult in today's world. It's not enough just to achieve business success, you also have to have domestic and romantic success and then, on top of that, you have to do competitive travelling around the globe to more and more obscure places than other people before your confidence is really boosted.

No wonder we have very little mental energy left for considering our comparatively paltry "achievements". It's much easier to talk about Wonder Bras and false eyelashes.



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SOTHEBY'S
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Deep in an English forest, Libby Purves and her children drag a reluctant father to Center Parcs and find it hard to drag him away

Welcome to the pleasure dome



Family fun: the Holiday Village is designed to please even the smallest children. Libby Purves and family (right) contemplate the joys of the tropical paradise in the dome

That's not it," said my husband, peering along the gloomy B1106. "That's the sign to the Anglo-Saxon village. Is that it down there? No, it's an intensive pig unit."

The man was nervous. He had never been to a Holiday Village before. The previous day he stared into the wardrobe at his collection of independent-minded sailing trousers and country tweeds and said: "I can't do it. I haven't even got a shell suit."

We urged him on, the children and I. There is no point nurturing a horror of "manufactured holidays" until you have tried one. We were going to a Center Parcs Holiday Village, and that was that. Apart from anything else, three of us were consumed with curiosity.

We live an hour away from the Elveden centre, in Suffolk, and ever since the late 1980s have heard the jungle drums of rumour. Deep in the Thetford forest, they said, something stirred. There were apocalyptic tales about 400 acres taken over by Dutch invaders, about excavators digging lakes and throwing up earth ramparts; improbable claims that a revolving restaurant had opened high among the dull, dark pine-tree tops, and that enormous lorries had brought a rainforest along the A45 at dawn, to be installed in a giant dome.

"A holiday camp," said the locals, mildly puzzled that it wasn't at Great Yarmouth. Too flash for a holiday camp, opined a local electrician, back from working on the villas. "They've got a Suzuki in every

bathroom." It took time to work that one out.

Then it opened, and more rumours slid around the schoolyard of children riding bikes along carless forest trails, canoeing on lakes, slithering down rapids, swimming to café islands for ice-creams and playing every game under the sun — even when there wasn't any sun, because of the wonderful dome.

We began to notice the most unlikely families sneaking to Elveden for long weekends: habitual poppers-off to Venice and sturdy Arthur Ransome types, whose normal idea of fun is a leaking clinker dinghy on the River Alde. "The children love it," they would mutter. "And they're so safe, and of course, there's the health club... you can get wrapped in seaweed, you know, while they're tenpin bowling."

So there we were on a gloomy Friday evening, turning off into the forest towards God knew what. But whatever it was, we needed it. "Inevitable and over-worked and raty as we were. The Dutch, origina-

tors of Center Parcs, highly value "tussendoor" or short, all-season breaks: these holiday villages will only take a week or two and Tuesday-to-Friday bookings, which makes them particularly welcome to busy families, who otherwise resort to booking a broad-week's narrowboat or croci-

cruser to use for only four days. We wanted to escape the world, but had not got long. To the event it took half an hour between checking into a compact, spotless little villa and becoming satisfactorily detached from reality, deep in the dome. We had been told by friends that to do with our reluctant member: we shepherded father firmly through the changing-room of the Subtropical Swimming Paradise ("I don't like public baths, you know that"), past the glittering blue lagoon with waves, the waterfalls, caves, jacuzzi, hot-pools, and Disneyish rocky coves, where bougainvillea and palms droop to the waterside.

We led him firmly up the steps to the top of the Wild Water Rapids, swam through the plastic curtain until we were in a high open-air pool with the warm water steaming gently at the starry pines, and pushed him over the concrete sill into the twisting, spurting, foaming waterslide.

The Wild Water Rapids are special. Once you have been flushed down crevasses, all arms and legs and shrieks, out in an English forest on a March night without being cold, you are not only gasping and dripping but hopelessly enthralled with the combination of womblike warm water, Disneyesque illusion and invisible engineering. "Again," said the children. "Again!" agreed their father. After landing a dozen more times, the final one entangled in a struggling knot of visiting Dutchmen, we swam more quietly in the salt-water pool, in and out of the great, open windows, dived through some waves, ate a pizza and fell into a dreamless sleep in our fiercely, Dutchly clean villa sheets. The Suzuki would have to wait for tomorrow.

There is a lot to cram in. The "village" is a scattered settlement of twinkling white villas littered along woodland roads and designed with fiendish ingenuity so nobody can see into anybody else's windows. You get around it on a hired bike. Near the dome there are man-made lakes: one for wildfowl, one for canoeing and sailing.

Inside the dome is the Park Plaza, where you can shop at an immaculate supermarket or play at being a European citizen by eating at Caesar's, Chez Pierre or Het Pannkoek Huisje, while admiring the un-European jungle foliage (they get an annual crop of bananas).

Also indoors, but with the air ten degrees cooler, is a vast *jardin des sports* for badminton, bowling, fencing, roller-skating, short-tennis, squash, ping-pong, etc. plus a nursery with artfully placed low wind-downs so toddlers peer in and long for admission instead of

resisting it. Beyond it are outdoor courts, bowls, and even day-pigeon shooting with environmentally friendly laser guns (Center Parcs wins awards for green tourism).

However, some of us are idle, and do not wish to pay for the pleasures of heartier guests; so you book and pay — reasonable amounts, as in a leisure centre — for each activity, except swimming. Old hands can be found at 8.30am at the computer booking points, holding family conferences on the lines of "If Chris finishes archery at 3.45, we don't want the tenpin alley till 5.30 so we shan't have to rush tea before my aerobics."

As I stood mesmerised, wondering about *pétanque* and seaweed-wraps, a man proffered advice. "What you do," he said, "is book one thing you really like, one you've always fancied trying, and one you have the sound of, for the rest of the time in the water."

So we did. After hurling ourselves down the rapids a few more dozen times we stumbled to a bar in the

Plaza's surreally clean, peaceful, idealised version of a tropical indoor Europe. Rose stirred her on-alcoholic cocktail with the umbrella as a jazz band struck up. "I feel," she said dreamily, "like Bertie Wooster."

By Sunday morning, we didn't know where we were at all: fed the squirrels on the patio, biked to the Plaza amid strolling and cycling families with every size of baby, and got seriously disoriented by paying normal price for the newspapers, because we had been thinking we were abroad. Not a bad achievement for the middle of the Thetford forest, in a cold English spring.

● Elveden Forest Holiday Village, Center Parcs, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 0YZ (0842 890000).

Making a splash: the Wild Water Rapids (above left) run down crevasses and through the forest before flushing bathers, all arms, legs and shrieks, into the warm pool. "Again," said the children. "Again!" agreed their father

Hello, playmates: the Holiday Village defies the old-fashioned holiday-camp image (above) of bathing belles and coach parties (pictures courtesy of the Hulton Deutsch Collection)

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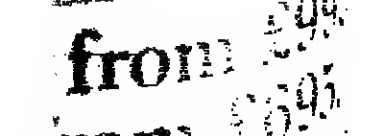
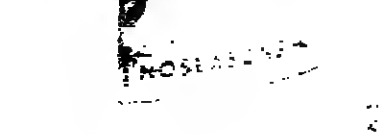
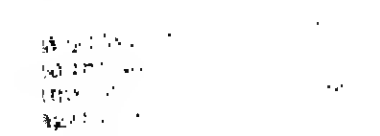
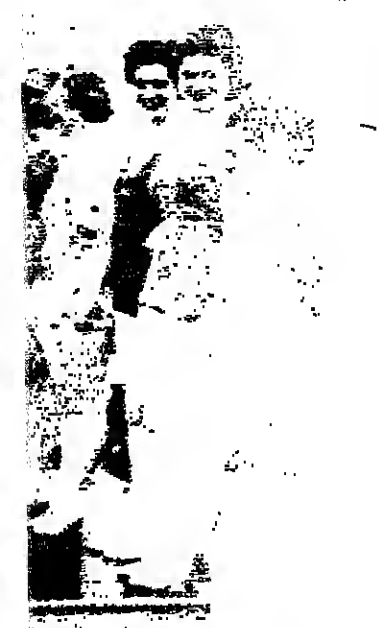
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Pink-letter day for the Michelangelo of the spud field

Has medicine yet recognised a distinct disorder called Post-Potato-Planting Syndrome? My symptoms are manic depressive, swinging from the height of euphoria — when it takes all my self-control to prevent me from parading around the village rejoicing. "They're in, they're done, they're planted for another year", to brooding despair — when I catch sight of the potato field at a wrong angle, and set my self-respect into a deep nose-dive.

I blame my suffering on a spiritual experience some years ago on the Yorkshire Wolds. I was driving towards the setting sun and ahead was a newly planted potato field. The land was oddly shaped and undulating, and so the ridges left by the potato-planting machine made dazzling patterns as the shadows moved across them. I stopped to watch this piece of living art, the beauty that can dwell in a properly

land and carefully drew the furrows into which we dropped the seed potato. Dilly, my old helper, came to my aid. "Have you ever shown potatoes at the village show?" I asked him. "I did one year," he announced to the entire field, "but I had to withdraw. The tater was so big I couldn't get it down side of the house."



perfection as anybody gets round here. Had Michelangelo turned to a Suffolk farmer to ask his opinion of the Sistine Chapel, he would have been told it "wasn't a half bad job at all". So I was happy that

that the end of one job only means the next. I had foolishly thought that once the spuds were in I could take a breather, have a few days off. But sheep need to be moved, with their fencing, the oats are ready for horse-hoeing and the wheat and barley will soon be ready. I was trying to crystallise in my mind what my predicament reminded me of, when a letter arrived.

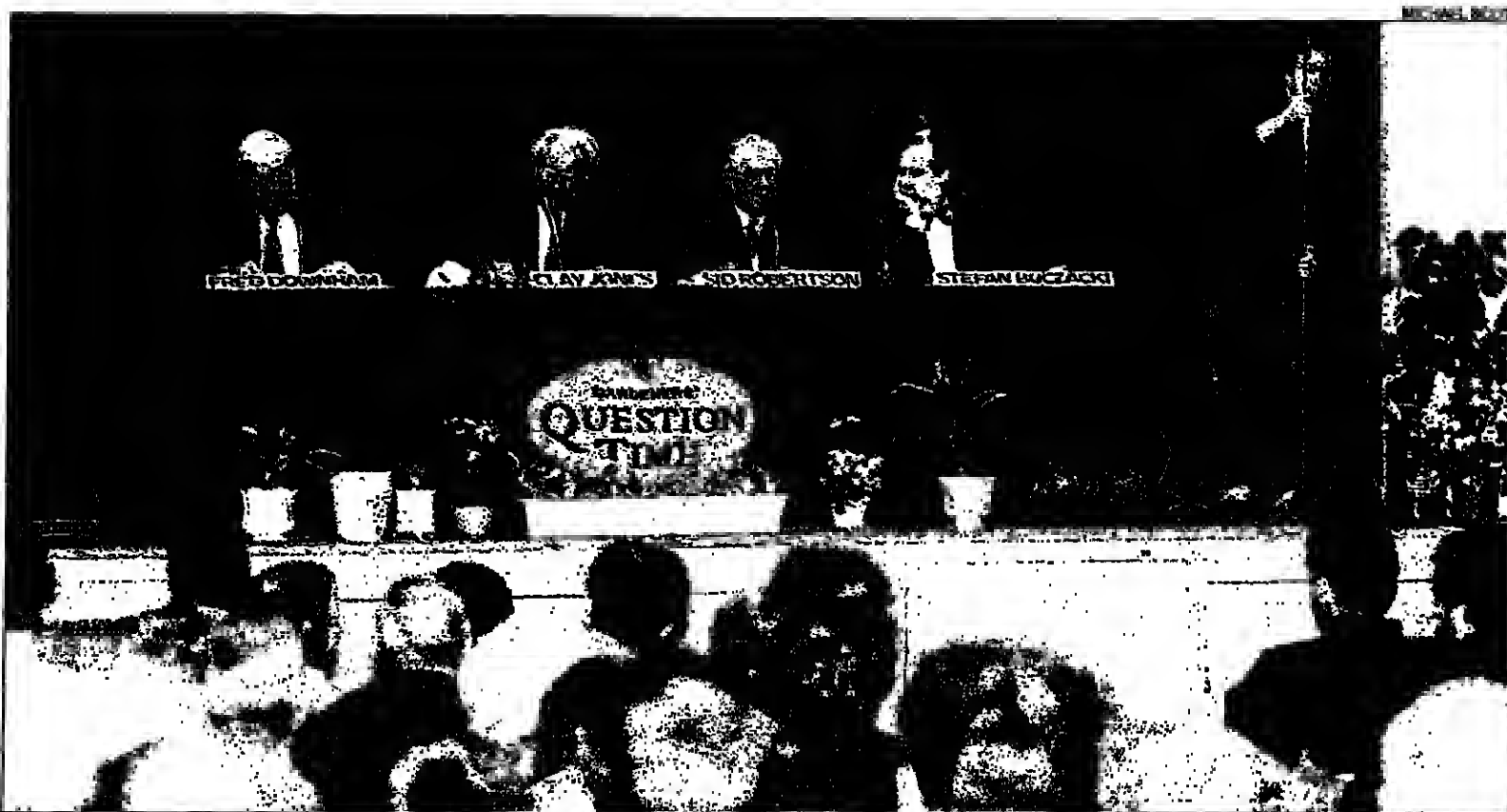
I have had many helpful suggestions from readers concerning the painting of my Ransome's Thrashing Drum, which I wish to decorate in its original, virulent shade of pink. A Mrs Burwell, of Downham Market, Norfolk, remembers her father mixing his own paint and falling so in love with it that he painted the outside privy with what came to be known in their family as "drum pink". She tells me the pink paint still haunts her, for she lately saw the very same shade on the walls of a tea-room of a National

When the Gardeners' Question Time team visits Newcastle, Helen Pickles watches the locals prepare the soil

The thrill of digging Clay

Jean's stomach has been churning since yesterday. Jeff has had to take the day off work. Ann is worrying whether she has made enough drop-scones. Such are the crises when *Gardeners' Question Time*, BBC Radio 4's longest-running panel show, comes up your garden path.

It has been the buzz of the Fenham district of Newcastle for the past six weeks, ever since Jeff Sutcliffe, founder member of St Robert's Horticultural Society, got the telephone call. He was a little taken aback, as it was four years since he'd sent the invitation, but he steamed into action.



Earthy wisdom: the team, (from left) Fred Downham, Clay Jones, Sid Robertson, Stefan Buczacki, answers questions from Fenham's gardeners

their paper plates with slices of ham, coleslaw and buttered buns. Mrs Bailey and Mrs Rudden hover with tea, coffee and orange juice.

Meanwhile, the chairs are filling up with sensibly anoraked and cardiganed folk. In the kitchen to one side of the stage, production assistant Sue Fletcher is briefing the 12 questioners. "When it's your turn, I'll sit by you and hold the microphone about ten inches from your mouth. Don't say 'good evening' because the programme goes out in the afternoon — nervous laughter — just say your name and your question. If you get tongue-tied or miss something, just stop and start again. You'll hear the team do the same. I hope you enjoy yourselves." Everyone troops out grinning foolishly, and

lips and silently practises saying "environmentally". "And who do we have next?" asks the genial Mr Jones. Mrs Rudden is so keen she doesn't bother waiting for Ms Fletcher to position the microphone and has to repeat the question. The team is much taken with it

— how to start a cheap, environmentally-friendly school garden — and Mrs Rudden has to sweat and gasp her way through their probing questions, in her excitement forgetting the house rules and flapping her paper at the microphone. "Now, we have a

large audience here tonight," Mr Jones pauses dramatically. "Jean Rudden's school wants some cuttings!" The audience giggles and murmurs appreciatively. Mrs Rudden is pink with pleasure.

"Enthusiastic, knowledgeable, organised. What I'm looking for is that moment when the audience realises they are part of the programme. Then they relax, start to answer back and the programme lifts."

Oh, we're doing that all right. We giggle when Mr Storey is chided for sowing his broad beans in November. We titter when Mrs Patterson is admonished for wanting to split her hellbores. "I can't believe you've been waiting all this time for us to come along," replies Dr Buczacki, when Mr Pearson asks why his lilac tree hasn't flowered for 11 years. The audience roars with laughter.

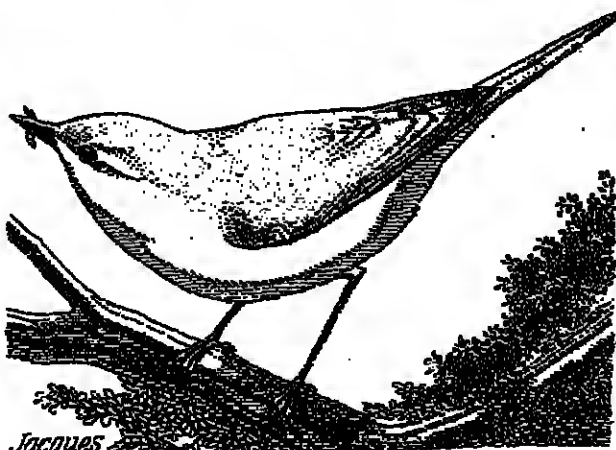
Within an hour and ten minutes, it's all over. There is genuine dismay. As Mr Jones signs off the programme, there's another window-cracking belt of applause. Reluctant to leave, the audience hovers around the stage, staring at the empty seats and place cards. Mrs Rudden, stuffing her face with one of Mrs Bailey's drop-scones, is on an after-performance high. "Oh, I'm so pleased it's over, I'll sleep well tonight. To think Clay Jones said, 'Jean Rudden wants some cuttings for her school.' Blissfully she crams in another drop-scone."

● *Gardeners' Question Time* is broadcast on Sundays at 2pm, repeated on Wednesdays at 11.30am. The edition recorded in Newcastle will be broadcast tomorrow and on Wednesday.

Feather report

Sweet song of an invader

About five million willow warblers are at present invading the British Isles, and will settle down as two-and-a-half million pairs. This vast, practically unnoticed migration takes place every year in April.



Homing in: five million willow warblers arrive each spring

that the willow warbler's legs are usually red and the chiff-chaff's black. However, they are instantly distinguished by

their songs. Also, the chiff-chaff's two clicking notes come generally from high treetops, whereas the willow warbler sings in smaller trees (birch woods and spinneys).

It builds a domed nest like the chiff-chaff — not, however, in the tops of brambles, but on the ground beneath them. It is harder to find a willow warbler's nest than a chiff-chaff's at the beginning of the season, because the latter constantly calls "hooet" when it is waiting to go down to the nest with a feather, while the willow warbler builds silently.

Willow warblers have spent the winter well to the south in Africa — nobody knows precisely where the British birds go, since Africa in December is packed with sojourning willow warblers from most of Europe and half of Asia. What we do know is that there have been some adverse weather conditions, either in the willow warblers' winter quarters or on their migration routes in the last few years, because there

has been a slight drop in the summer population here.

Another warbler has been following hard on the hind claws of the willow warblers: the blackcap. This species, by contrast, has been rather more numerous here in recent summers. It has one of the wildest, richest songs of all the British birds, hurried out as it slips through the upper branches of the oaks and ashes.

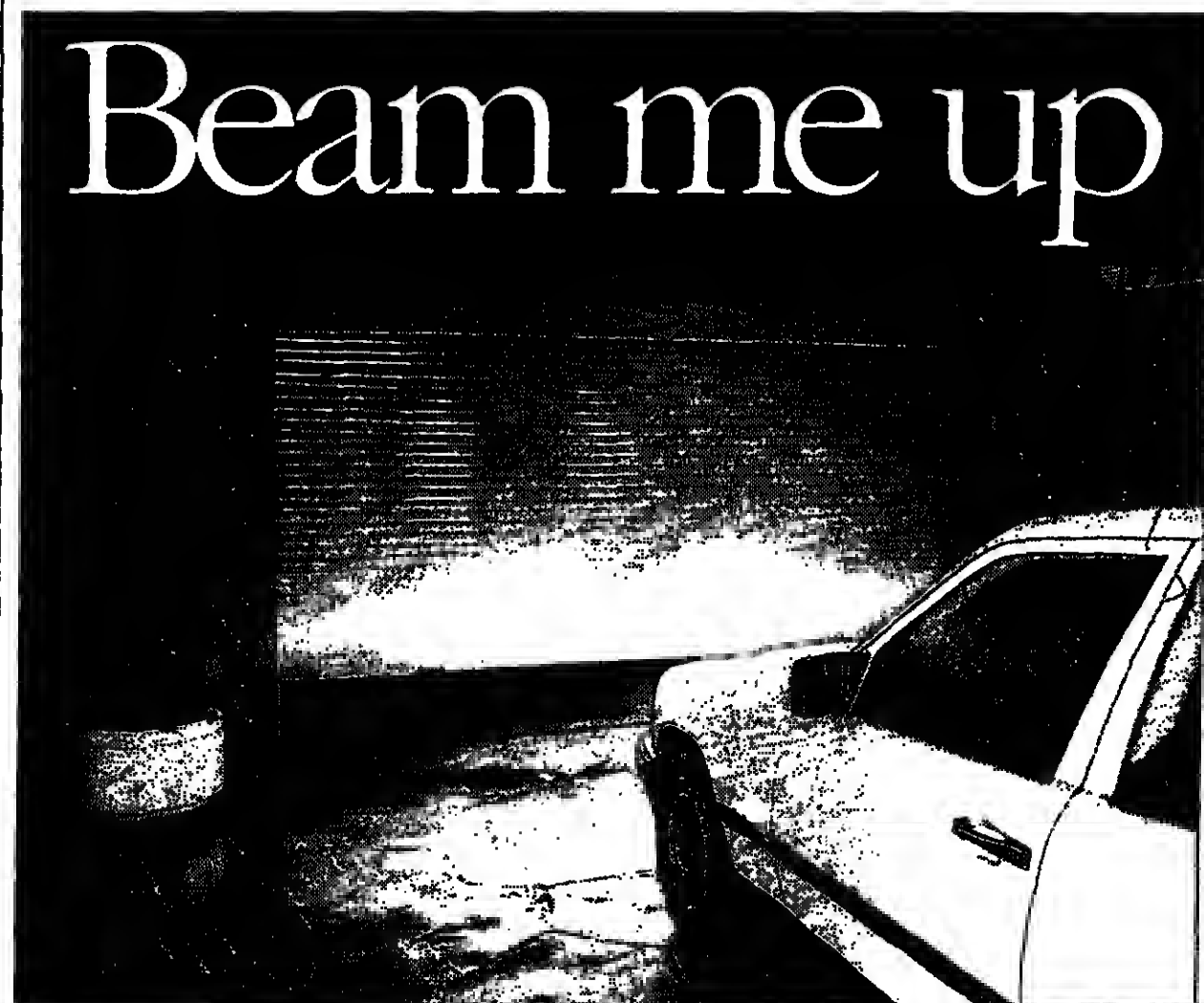
It is one of the birds to take a good look at now, before the leaves are fully out. The male, which is the singer, is a pale grey bird with a conspicuous black cap. The female has a brown cap. You can find them in woods and copses, sometimes gardens, when they have not yet reached their breeding sites.

With all the excitement of birds arriving from the south, it is easy to forget that a large departure to the north has also been taking place. The redwings and fieldfares sometimes announce their intention to leave. In the early spring, both species gather in flocks in tree-tops on the edge of the fields, and warble in a rambling, jangly way.

Sometimes I have heard the last of them singing like that while the song of a chiff-chaff comes distinctly across the field from another woodland edge — the voices of winter and summer mingling.

DERWENT MAY

● What's about: *Birders* — listen out for the first cuckoo; watch for newly arriving white-throats. *Twitchees* — black-winged stilts and Ceryle Bay, Anglesey; Sub-alpine warbler at Hengistbury Head, Dorset. Details from Birdline, 0898 700222. Calls cost 36p per minute cheap rate, 48p per minute at all other times.



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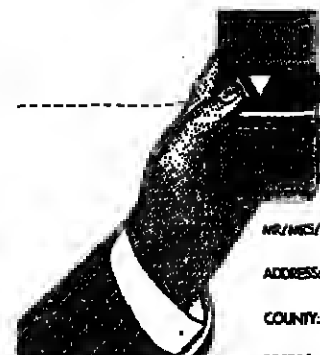
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Divas, tenors, arias and chips

Who says the Royal Opera House is not for the masses? Next week, while *La Favorita* by Donizetti plays on the stage (next Wednesday and Saturday), outside, in another corner of the building, hamburgers will be available before, during, afterwards and, indeed, for the foreseeable future. Never again can it be said not to have catholic appeal.

The Princess of Wales is due at the Royal Opera House next Saturday. If her sons accompany her, she may well choose to follow opera with a burger. She will find the former wardrobe-room, hitherto a sanctum in this grade I listed building, pulsating not to arias but to the Rolling Stones. The Royal Opera House, harmonising with the many changes in Covent Garden, has granted the lease to Maxwell's quick-food restaurant.

Whether the patrons in the grand tier, who will be paying £103 for a seat this week, will take to cajun popcorn (£3.75), buffalo wings (£2.25) or Sex on the Beach (£3.75), vodka, peach schnapps, orange juice, one cranberry, lime and grapefruit juices is another matter. "I am sure there will be one or two people who will think this is absolutely terrible," says Brian Stein, the 49-year-old restaurateur behind the venture. "They will see it as another nail in the coffin of the old establishment. Six months later, they'll come and try it."

The wardrobe-room and dressing-rooms were moved last year to bigger premises in the Floral Hall, leaving a site ideal for a restaurant. There is an opening on to James Street, next to the Royal Opera House's shop and a few yards from

Fast food is on the menu at the Royal Opera House. Ivo Tennant has a quick taste

the entrance to the amphitheatre and its relatively cheap seats. "I don't think we can be justifiably criticised," says Dick Ensor, head of development at the Royal Opera House. "Some people do not like the way Covent Garden has changed, but there is a lot of demand for eating out, and we are not giving a lease to the sort of place you find on the seafloor at Southend."

Mr Stein, who owns several restaurants in the area, has been given a 25-year lease by the Royal Opera House. It is a quarter of a century, the aficionados and the 1,000 people who work there daily have not come round to fast food, they never will. Expectations are that they will be won over: 230 seats are being installed in Maxwell's.

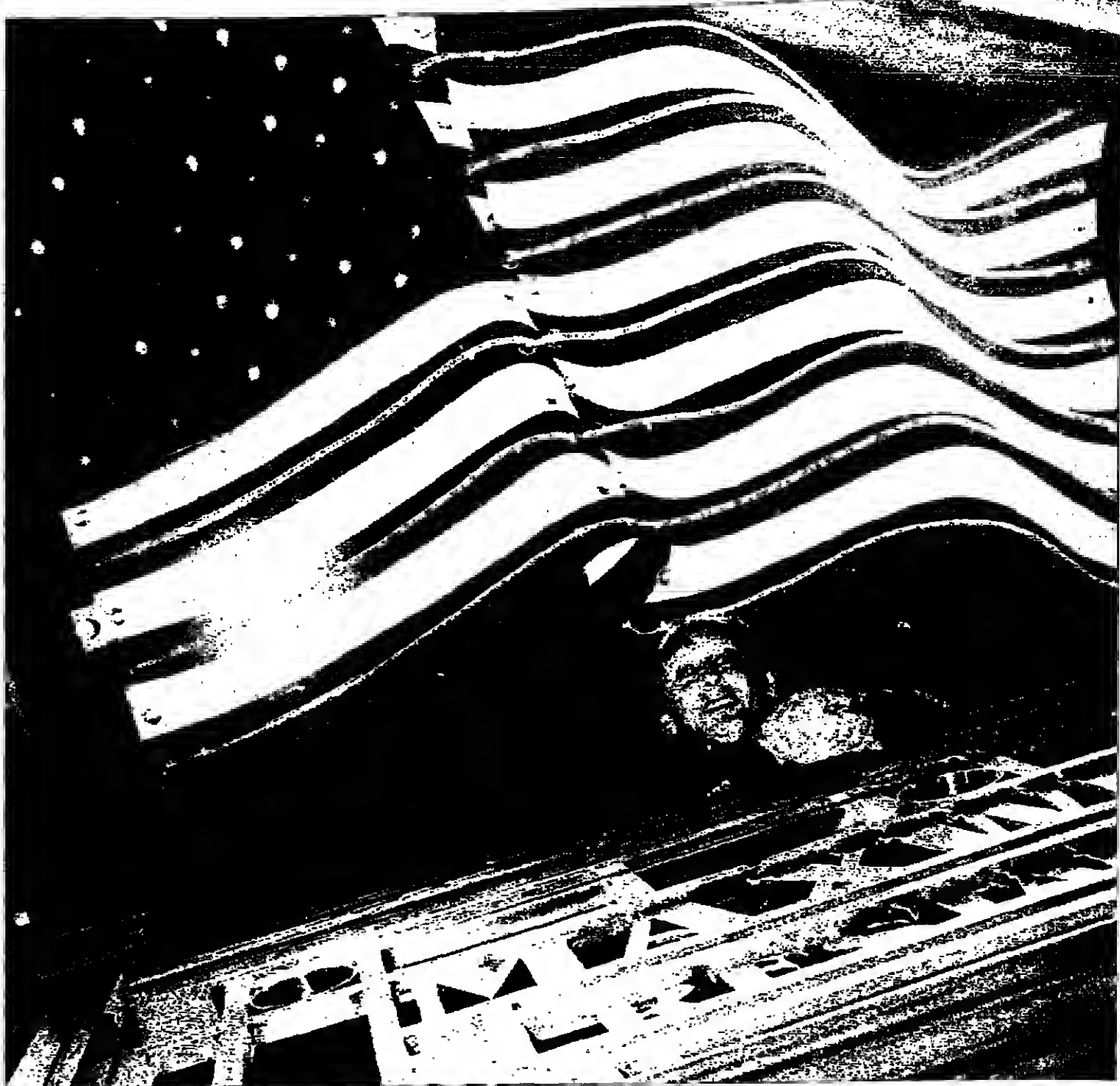
Mr Stein is doing his utmost to woo them all. More than £100,000 has been spent on sound-proofing, to ensure the Stones (and rhythm and blues, country rock and jazz) do not filter through to the rehearsal room immediately upstairs. He took advice from the New York Opera House. He would also have liked to transmit performances on to a screen in the restaurant, and put up signs saying "Please munch quietly - opera in progress", but the copyright laws forbade it.

He is aware that his potential clientele will be nothing if not discerning. "It is an odd marriage, but odd marriages often work. And the people who go to opera have changed. A good hamburger, which should always be eaten with one's hands, can be one of the greatest meals. Even after being in Paris, I can come back to London and want one. I was brought up on them in roadhouses and drive-in cinemas in South Africa."

The 6oz hamburgers that Maxwell's will serve will be made of grade A beef, with lettuce, tomato and red onion, and will come with fries, apple coleslaw and dill pickle (£5.75). There will be a cheaper veggie burger. Other items on the menu, which is essentially American, will be *chimichanga* and *fajitas*, Mexican pancakes made of flour, mini *quesadilla*, which is a grilled flour tortilla stuffed with cheddar, chilies and spring onion; and blackened cajun meat, fish or chicken cooked in a cast-iron skillet. There will be a separate children's menu. A short, inexpensive wine list takes in every important wine-producing country except South Africa, which tells you much about Mr Stein's political views.

However, if global American cooking (as Maxwell's styles itself) is not for you, do not repine. The whiff of fried onion rings will not reach the grand tier or amphitheatre, nor even the seats with semi-restricted views. The neon signs beckoning passing trade on James Street will be dimly lit. The Princess of Wales, should she be drawn to the char-grill, will find herself depicted in a mural the length of a wall.

Maxwell's, 071-836 0303.



Maxwell's owner Brian Stein: "Some people will see this as another nail in the establishment coffin. Six months later, they'll try it"

Don't panic when the object of your desires arrives for dinner. Julia Llewellyn Smith has the answers

How to compose the food of love



"SHOULD I, after tea and cake and ices, have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?" T.S. Eliot's *Prufrock* asked. He was speaking for all of us who have ever eaten a meal in the company of somebody we would like to know better. In such situations our minds are seldom wholly on the food in front of us, but dwelling on what will come afterwards.

Most romances are conducted initially in public places. The first meeting at somebody's home is always a significant step forward in any relationship. In restaurants and bars you may be judged on your table manners, mean tipping or mispronunciation of French names. At home your guest will be free to inspect your standards of cleanliness, your levels of taste, your record collection and contents of your bathroom cabinet.

After replacing your Jeffrey Archer novels with the complete works of Roland Barthes and sweeping a year's worth of dust under the carpet, cooking a meal may be the last thing you can face. But a dish in the oven can be an excellent excuse to slip away and check that your flies are not undone. And anyone who has seen Jack Lemmon straining spaghetti through a tennis racket, in the film *The Apartment*, will know that a man cooking is a touching sight.

Preparing a dinner for two is a far less daunting prospect than it may first appear. All the clichés apply: light your candles, put flowers on the table and restrain your passion for Whitesnake when it comes to background music. Cook a dish that is quick to

make and which you have prepared countless times before. If you have to divide your attentions between the object of your desires and your recipe book, one will get neglected, with potentially disastrous results.

Do not give your first dinner together your best shot. If you toil for three days over your Raymond Blanc cookbook in preparation for the event, you will be setting a standard you may be unable to repeat. Such all-out effort should be saved

for much later in the relationship, when your willingness to please may be less apparent. This, however, does not mean that frozen fish fingers and canned vegetables are in order. You want to make something that reveals your skill and imagination, and which promises greater things upon better acquaintance.

Similarly, blatant extravagance is not a good idea. If you, or your guest, are destined to break each other's hearts, then at least your bank

balance will be relatively intact. No need to spend much on the main ingredients: it is the details that are important: fresh herbs, exotic types of bread, Heinz ketchup and Hellmann's mayonnaise will convince your guest that you know what the important things are in life. Have a good supply of alcohol in stock, but do not be too generous here or your evening may end sooner than you would like.

Serve nothing too blandly aphrodisiac. If it really takes a

cup of powdered rhinoceros horn to get your guest to fancy you, then it was not meant to be. And keep it neat. After an evening of sparkling conversation, nobody wants to look in the mirror and find spinach stuck between the teeth or bolognese sauce splattered down his or her shirt. You can behave like Albert Finney and Joyce Redman in *Tom Jones* when you know each other better.

Good guests arrive bearing a gift (but preferably not their

toothbrush), offer to help, comment favourably on everything, and never, ever compare anything to the state of affairs at their ex's, or worse still their mother's.

So with all this in mind, try one of the following recipes. Results cannot be guaranteed, but all are quick and easy to make and contain ingredients exotic enough to impress but not so bizarre as to provoke violent stomach reactions or allergies. Naturally, all these recipes are for two.

Pasta with vodka
A packet of penne pasta
lump of butter
tomato paste
small pot of single cream
quarter bottle of vodka (only 3 tbsp are needed, but the joy of this dish is that you can drink the rest while cooking)
fresh basil
salt and pepper

All of these ingredients, except the basil, can be kept in stock. Cook the pasta in plenty of boiling water. While it is

cooking, melt the butter in a saucepan, stir in the tomato paste to taste, then add the cream a little at a time, stirring constantly until they combine to make a smooth sauce.

When the pasta is ready, drain it, put it back in the pan. Take the sauce off the heat, add the vodka, and stir into the pasta. Add the basil, torn into small pieces, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Artichokes on toast
ciabatta bread (thick slices of white bread will do but ciabatta is the best)
jar of artichokes in oil (on sale in large branches of Sainsbury's)
cheddar cheese, grated
lemon juice
pepper

Toast the bread very lightly, then cover with the artichokes cut in half. Put the grated cheese on top with a drop of lemon juice and sprinkling of pepper. Put back under the grill until the cheese is bubbling.

Kidneys in mustard
6 lamb's kidneys
butter
pot of single cream
pot of sour cream
pot of whole-grain mustard
rice
green beans

Wash the kidneys, and cut in half, removing the hard centres. Fry them in butter. Meanwhile mix the two creams and stir in the mustard a bit at a time, tasting constantly.

When the kidneys are ready, stir in the sauce. Add seasoning to taste. Serve with rice to soak up the sauce, and with green beans.

Let the chef choose the wine or lunch at the plumber's

The personal touch

WINE COURSES
River Restaurant
The Savoy Hotel, Strand,
London WC2
(071-836 4343)

Maitre chef des cuisines Anton Edelmann and sommelier Werner Wissmann have put their heads together to produce a five-course seasonal menu with wines that they have personally tasted and tested to accompany the food. *Robin Young writes*: £45 with four glasses of wines chosen as "a perfect marriage", £38.50 without, for those who still prefer to abstain or choose their own. Lunch menu (without wines) is £25.20, and an alternative dinner menu (also dry) is available at £30.50. Open 12.30-2.30pm and 7.30-11.30pm (except Sundays, when there is no evening dining and last orders are at 10.30pm).

SNAIL'S PROGRESS
1, Escarot
45 Greek Street, Soho,
London W1 (071-437 2679)

Garry Holliday and David Cavalier reopened the brasserie this week, and the refurbished upstairs restaurant starts up again on Tuesday. Diners help themselves to provincial dishes such as *pot au feu*, boudins, and *boeuf bourguignon* in the brasserie.

On the main restaurant menu, dishes include pressed terrine of rabbit and pistachio, braised turbot with roast endive, beef with Parma ham and sage, and a baked brioche and pear pudding. Set lunch menu £2.50 (three courses). Reckon £20 to £25 in the brasserie, £30 to £35 upstairs.

RESTAURANT WATCH
XXXXXX

Brasserie: 12.15-2.30pm and 6-11.30pm, seven days a week. Restaurant: 12.15-2.30pm and 7-11.30pm (closed Saturday lunch and Sunday).

CAPITAL CANTINE
The Square Wine Bar & Restaurant
Tolmers Square, London NW1 (071-388 6010)

This is the local favourite with Capital Radio staff, hidden away in a pedestrian precinct as part of the Prudential building at the junction of Hampstead and Euston Roads. The wine bar is open from 8am for breakfasts to

11pm, Mondays to Fridays. Advisable to book at lunch time. Victoria Willson does all the cooking, including a daily fresh soup and *plat du jour*. A big chargrill serves steaks and chops. Recommended dessert: bananas with hot chocolate sauce. The repertoire of some 50 wines is constantly changing, but the last week in April and first in May will see a special promotion for wines from Argentina and Chile. Reckon £18 to £20 for a three-course meal and bottle of house wine.

ON QUEUE
Fuanyway's mekalin
41 Bridge Street,
Berwick-upon-Tweed,
Northumberland
(0289 308827)

Elizabeth Middlermiss has now started informal counter-service lunches at her wonderfully personal restaurant in what was once a plumber's shop. She does set-piece dinners on Wednesday to Saturday nights (set meal £18.50, 7.30 for 8pm). No booking for lunches (Monday to Friday 11.30am-2.30pm, first come, first served), which are "all freshly prepared, immediate food", with starters and sweets mostly less than £3, and main courses about £4. Selection of wines by the glass.

Food spy

Olive oil may not be quite what it seems

Acid test of a real virgin

become rancid as the oleic acid molecules break down.

If acid content is no immediate guide to what an olive oil will taste like, then neither are colour nor country of origin. Judy Ridgway, who wrote a paper on olive oil for the EC, organised a tasting recently to demonstrate this, using branded oils from supermarket shelves to show that depth of colour was no guide to strength of taste.

It would have been possible, Miss Ridgway said, to produce the full range of styles and flavours from any one of the EC producing countries, with the possible exception of France, where the more northerly climate limits the types of olives that can be grown.

There are olive varieties - the Greek *Kalamata* for example - and Tuscan *Frantoio* - which have marked effects on the style of the resulting oil, and there are recognisable

regional differences to the style consumers prefer. Tuscan oil is expected to be green and fragrant, Ligurian light and delicate, Puglian to have a bitter-almond note. Sicilian oil is supposed to be grassy.

"But," says Francesco Giusti, an Italian restaurateur who has written books on the subject, "you can find terrible oil in Tuscany and Umbria, and excellent ones in Calabria."

Until now, oil has been able to change its region of origin simply by being transported before bottling. At a recent tasting to launch Laudemio estate-bottled Tuscan oils, which retail at about £14 a bottle, the point was made that after the Big Freeze of 1985, there should have been no Tuscan oil for sale. Yet mysteriously, Tuscan oil continued to flow from estates which had no olives. Italy always consumes more olive oil than it produces, yet it is the world's second-largest exporter.

How, then, to pick one's way through this maze? The only answer is to buy oils from reputable sources and to have a number of different styles available at any one time. I keep two pricey estate-bottlings for dinner party dressings, one mild, the other peppery. Then I have a branded extra-virgin for everyday use, and a "pure" olive oil for cooking.

ROBIN YOUNG
Cooking with olive oil, opposite page

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Here at Wilkin & Sons we don't very often take on new staff. Our employees stay for lifetimes, even generations. But very occasionally we do employ someone new. It's a salutary experience to a company who might be thought of as a little 'set' in their ways to understand things might be done differently.

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Oiling the wheels of summer

With the promise of sunshine ahead, Frances Bissell opens the olive oil



ONE way of hurrying summer into the kitchen is to add a splash of sunshine with a rich, fruity olive oil. Why it should be so redolent of summer is hard to fathom, since olives ripen in the autumn and are harvested and made into oil in the winter. Nevertheless, the sight of a bottle of cloudy green or clear golden oil, or the smell of fish frying in olive oil, or olive oil poured on toasted sourdough bread, rubbed with garlic and ripe tomatoes, are quite enough to evoke the rest of summer's pleasures.

We are lucky in the variety of extra-virgin olive oils now available to us in delicatessens and supermarkets. There are olive oils to suit every palate, and the variety in flavour is quite extraordinary. The best way to find ones you like is to take part in an olive-oil tasting. I am not convinced that reading the findings of a tasting panel is helpful. I have taken part in such tastings in the past and was not surprised to find almost as many different verdicts as there were oils. I did not care at all for one oil, which turned out to be from a very famous Tuscan producer. On the other hand, I like most of the creamy Ligurian olive oils.

In recent years, I have enjoyed the Spanish extra-virgin oils from Catalonia and Andalusia, the Portuguese extra-virgin olive oil from Quinta la Rosa, and one of my favourites, an extra-virgin olive oil called Kydonia, from Crete, where it has been made for 2,000 years. And now that the new olive trees in Tuscany, planted after the devastating frosts of 1985, are producing, there are fine estate-bottled Tuscan oils available of the 1992 crop, under the Laudemio label.

However, you might have quite different tastes. An inexpensive and fascinating way to judge this is to hold an olive oil tasting at home, perhaps before Sunday lunch or supper. Invite all your guests to bring a bottle of extra-virgin olive oil that they like, covered in brown paper. Number all the bottles, have

chunks of bread in a basket and, to clear the palate, slices of apple. Taste each oil by dipping in bread or drinking it from a spoon. But first pour a little into your hands, rub them together and inhale the aromas. Having tasted all the oils, taken notes on them and ranked them in order of preference, uncover the bottles to reveal all. You will do just as well as the experts.

Olive oil is versatile and has many uses in the kitchen. Apart from being indispensable to the well-dressed salad, it adds flavour to marinades and soups. Brushed on fish and shellfish before grilling, olive oil makes a protective barrier and helps to prevent drying out. It can be used to baste meats which have no layer of fat or marbling. Fragrant olive oil is an excellent frying medium, with a high smoke point, but it is also, I discover, an excellent medium for poaching.

In Les Landes, in southwest France, I came across a recipe for poaching salmon in goose fat. It was just as good when I cooked it at home, following advice to keep the fat no hotter than 80C so that the fish would not fry. For most of us, I imagine extra-virgin olive oil is more available than goose fat, and I have used it in today's recipe with cod steaks. Duck fat works very well too as a poaching medium.

A dish of cod and olive oil begins to have hints of Portugal, enhanced by the addition of a garlic coriander sauce. Hake, salmon and monkfish can all be cooked in the same way. A fresh, crisp vinho verde, the young "green" wine of Portugal, will go down very well with this.

The traditional Portuguese soup of dark green shredded cabbage and potato, caldo verde, liberally doused with olive oil, would make a good starter. So too would steamed sea kale or broccoli sprouts served with an orange mouseline sauce. Use a blood orange or, if you have any in the freezer, a Seville orange. For mayonnaise, particularly a delicate mouseline sauce, I prefer to use grape-seed oil to a powerfully flavoured olive oil. More pleasant than merely neutral, grape-seed oil is also good for frying food.



Orange mouseline sauce
(makes about 1/2 pt/140ml)
This sauce uses uncooked egg
1 large free-range egg, at room temperature, and separated
1 orange
salt and pepper
1/2 tsp Dijon or grain mustard
1/4 pt/140ml grape-seed oil

Put the egg yolk in a bowl with the finely grated zest of orange, seasoning and mustard. Mix thoroughly, and, drop by drop, add the oil, beating and stirring continuously. When the mixture thickens, the oil can be added in greater quantity. Squeeze the juice from the orange, and use some of it to flavour the mayonnaise. Whisk the egg white to firm peaks and fold into the mayonnaise.

Steam or poach your chosen vegetables, and serve warm or tepid with the mouseline sauce.

New potatoes
Olive oil can be used to flavour stove-top new potatoes, which accompany fish dishes very well. To make them, scrub and parboil the

potatoes, and then drain thoroughly. Put about 1/2 in/0.5cm extra-virgin olive oil in a heavy, lidded saucepan. Put in the potatoes, cover with the lid, and set over moderate heat. Shake from time to time to prevent them from burning and to encourage browning all over.

Sprinkle with coarse sea-salt before serving.

Olive oil poached cod with coriander sauce
(serves 4)
4 x 6oz/170g small, thick cod fillets
salt and pepper
1 lemon
olive oil for poaching

Tie the cod fillets into a neat shape, and season lightly. Grate lemon zest on the fish, and sprinkle it with lemon juice. Leave for half an hour or so. Heat the oil to 80C in a pan just large enough to hold the fish in a single layer. Blot any excess moisture from the fish, and lower each piece into the oil. Poach for 10-12 minutes, longer if the fillets are very thick. Remove from the oil,

drain, and serve on heated plates. Serve with the coriander sauce, which you can make just after seasoning the fish.

Coriander sauce
(serves 4)
1 head of garlic
bunch of coriander, trimmed and well washed
3oz/85g blanched almonds
salt and pepper

Peel the garlic, and put the cloves in a saucepan, barely covered with water. Bring to the boil, and throw the water away. Barely cover the garlic with water again, or use semi-skimmed milk, and cook until the garlic is soft. Chop the coriander, and put it in a blender or food processor. Pour on some of the hot garlic water, and process for a few seconds. Add the garlic and almonds, and process further, gradually adding the rest of the garlic water. Season to taste, and serve with the fish.

To finish a meal I sometimes like to return to a flavour I have used earlier in a different context. Thus

oranges appear today in both savoury and sweet dishes. Using oil in place of butter in cakes makes for a heavier texture. This is counterbalanced by carefully sifting the flour and using extra egg whites. Serve the cake cold as a pudding, with a glass of sweet wine, such as an orange muscat.

The cake also keeps well if wrapped or stored in an airtight box in the refrigerator. Sweet wine can also replace the orange juice in the recipe.

Orange oil and orange flower water are available from Culpepers. If you cannot get the oil, use extra orange zest, from which, of course, orange oil is derived.

Orange and olive oil cake
5 free-range eggs, separated plus extra 2 egg whites
6oz/170g caster or light muscovado sugar
grated zest of an orange
1/2 tsp orange oil
1 tsp orange flower water
1 tsp orange liqueur
1/2 lb/230g flour, sifted 2 or 3 times
good pinch of salt

4fl oz/110ml freshly squeezed orange juice
4fl oz/110ml olive oil

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar until pale and fluffy. Fold in the zest, oil, orange flower water and liqueur. Beat the flour into the mixture gradually, making sure the salt is added at this stage. Add the orange juice and olive oil, making sure that the batter is well mixed. Whisk the egg whites to firm peaks, and then fold into the batter. Line a loose-bottomed 8in/20cm cake tin with greaseproof paper and butter generously. Pour the batter in, and smooth the top. Bake in the top half of a pre-heated oven at 190C/375F, gas mark 5 for 20 minutes. Turn down to 170C/325F, gas mark 3, and bake for a further 20 minutes. Turn the heat off, cover the cake with a piece of buttered greaseproof paper to stop further browning, and let the cake settle for 10 minutes. The cake behaves like a soufflé and will sink. This does not spoil the flavour or texture at all. Remove from the oven, and turn the cake on to a rack to cool.

Wine's human touch

While winemakers must acknowledge that influences beyond themselves fashion the world's wines, their input and influence is growing.

Man has no real control over climate, soil and established vineyard site. Nor can winemakers dictate when the sun will shine or the rain fall. Yet at the everyday end of the wine spectrum "winemaker wines" are increasingly available. Unlike the pricier *methode ancienne* wines, these new-wave bottles bear the stamp of new technology above all else.

My first taste of these new-wave wines was a decade ago in Portugal. Since then, wine school-trained whiz-kids — principally from Australia, or at least Australian-trained — have flown the world with their high-tech art. They make a host of clean, sometimes stylish, primary fruit flavour wines from popular grape

What nature begins, man perfects in the winery, Jane MacQuitty reports



Glass master: tasting a new-wave wine in California

varieties, mostly out of southern French co-operatives. Hugh Ryan's shining HDR wines — produced in France, Hungary, Moldavia and, soon, South Africa — are the most successful by far of

these, because of their excellent quality and low price. No wonder high-street giants such as Sainsbury's, Tesco, Victoria Wine, Safeway and Majestic stock them.

Last year, Tesco joined the

club with its six-strong "International Winemaker" range, and four new editions arrived this month, again under the direction of Jacques Lurton, the Bordeaux winemaker, who has also done his stint in Australia. M Lurton's 1992 Semillon-Riesling from the Barossa (Tesco £3.79) is light, sherbet and pleasant, as is the jammy, macerated 1992 Pinot Noir-Merlot (Tesco £3.99) from the same place.

Other far-flung winemakers' wines worth looking out for soon include James Herriek's from his La Mone estate in Narbonne, southwest France. Oddities will stock his first 1992 Chardonnay for £4.99 next week.

Sainsbury's vibrant new £2.99 Do Campo red and white is Peter Bright's latest release in Britain. Spain too is likely to be a future source of many winemakers' wines — like Hungary and the rest of eastern Europe, its new high-tech ways will show an immediate and usually dramatic kick-on in quality. A typical example is M Lurton's zippy 1992 Ruenda Sauvignon Blanc (Sainsbury's, £3.99).

Why all these winemakers' wines work has little to do with vineyards, and rather more with wineries. Here, vastly improved hygiene, new yeast strains, clarification and cold fermentation of the juice give instant results, usually in the shape of easy, fruity, gulpable wines, such as Bulgaria's brilliantly rich and fruity Young Vatted Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot (Safeway, £2.85).

Best buys

- Do Campo Branco and Tinto (Portugal), Sainsbury's £2.99.
- 1992 Ruenda Sauvignon Blanc (Spain), Sainsbury's £3.99.
- 1992 Gyöngyös Estate Sauvignon and Chardonnay (Hungary), Safeway £3.30, Thrasher and Sainsbury's £3.29.
- 1991 Slovakian Pinot Blanc (Slovakia), The Victoria Wine Company £2.99.
- 1992 Young Vatted Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot (Bulgaria), Safeway £2.85.

ENJOY AN EVENING WITH THE TIMES AND A MASTER WINEMAKER



Taste the best of Burgundy at the Faiveley masterclass

As the Burgundians tend to stay at home and their best wines often end up abroad, occasions such as the forthcoming Burgundy masterclasses organised by The Times and Majestic Wine Warehouses are rare (Jane MacQuitty writes).

The masterclasses — to be held in the Garden Room and Conservatory at the Barbican, London, on Sunday May 9, Monday May 10 and Tuesday May 11 — will be taught by François Faiveley, the sixth generation of his family to direct the leading *negociant*, the house of Joseph Faiveley, based in Nuits-Saint-Georges.

With 112 hectares of its own vineyards, including important holdings in Corton and many more in the Côte de Nuits, Faiveley is an unusual merchant house in that it buys in less than one-third of its grape needs. As such, Faiveley is that almost unique burgundy phenomenon, a merchant and an important domaine owner all in one.

The same purist Faiveley approach is present in its winemaking standards: the grapes here are carefully selected, before a long, cool fermentation and the top Faiveley wines spend six months ageing in new oak. In addition, Faiveley *grand cru* wines are bottled directly from the cask without filtration, which again should ensure the purest burgundy expressions of all.

Knowledgeable and entertaining, François Faiveley will explain at the masterclass the differences between each wine, how it is made, and the influence of geography, climate and vintage. Between samples, he will help you to understand the subtle differences in bouquet and taste.

Judge for yourself at one of our

masterclasses where, in relaxing surroundings, you can drink your way through eight different Faiveley wines, including some exclusive old vintages available only for these masterclasses.

The tasting starts with the splendid chewy, chunky 1990 Pinot Noir and the equally more-ish, musky, peachy 1991 Chardonnay, on up to such Faiveley heights as the glorious, heady-scented 1988 Corton Charlemagne and the rich, firm, plummy red '89 Corton Clos des Cortons.

The 1½-hour masterclasses start on

Sunday at 6pm for 6.15pm, Monday and Tuesday at 7pm for 7.15pm, and will be followed by a sparkling wine reception with canapés. Tickets cost £20 per person — a bargain, as the wines cost ten times that amount.

Times masterclasses always prove popular and we advise early application. To reserve your invitation, complete the coupon and send it with your remittance to: Sarah Wykes, The Times/Majestic Faiveley Wine Tasting, Majestic Wine Warehouses, Odhams Trading Estate, St Albans Road, Watford WD2 5RE.

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From Russia with love

Ruth Gledhill stands in spiritual awe amid the faithful and penitent at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral in London



THE word "orthodoxy" means right belief or right worship. The emphasis in orthodoxy is on love, the greatest of the three graces listed by St Paul. And the love shown at this cathedral in Britain where the congregation is growing by the week, as increasing numbers of Russians travel to the West and return to their ancient faith.

In Britain, the Orthodox include Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Antiochian and Oriental churches, with a total membership of about 250,000.

I attended the cathedral church of the Russian Orthodox diocese of Sourozh, which covers the British Isles and has about 3,000 members. The diocese comes under spiritual jurisdiction of Patriarch Alexis of Moscow and All Russia. The worldwide Orthodox church consists of a number of self-governing churches, although all acknowledge the honorary primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, along with the three other ancient patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

The service lasted about two and a half hours, and for much of it the members of the 200-strong congregation stood, bowed and occasionally prostrated themselves in veneration. Irina Kirillova, a member of the diocesan assembly and parish council, said: "It is the good Orthodox principle that you are transported into another level of being and you forget about time."

Orthodox churches rarely have pews because these inhibit freedom of worship and impede the various processions, although chairs were supplied for those who find standing difficult. The number who remained standing throughout was impressive, considering the strict adherence by Orthodox Christians to their Lenten fast. The Orthodox Lent lasts seven weeks, longer than the non-Orthodox, and during this period no meat, fish, animal products, olive oil or alcohol are allowed. Most of those present were keeping this fast, and the slow, sad rhythm of our service was a sign of the Lenten mood, in

preparation for the feast of Easter.

The service was celebrated by Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch, who came to England in December 1991 to minister to the influx of Russians that followed Yeltsin's accession to power. He arrived fresh from work with Orthodox Christians living in some tension among the Muslim Tartars in Kerch and Ufa, southwest of the Urals. His understated style of worship is complemented by an amazed surprise in his eyes, suggesting astonishment at the changes that have brought him to the West and freed the Russian Church from repression in the East.

Before the service began, a small bookshop inside the church did a brisk trade in books from the East, alongside Western tracts such as St Augustine's *Confessions*. Many of the Russians arriving here have a deep faith but little knowledge of their church, and are reading avidly. Catechetical classes have been laid on to help them. Father Alexander Postropoulos, the Orthodox chaplain at London University, took confessions in open church before and during the service, as is Orthodox practice.

In the Orthodox church, priests can marry but bishops and archbishops must be celibate. In line with this, the three parish priests in London are married.

Beyond listening, praying silently, meditating and receiving communion, the congregation took no part in the service. The liturgy followed a pattern similar to non-Orthodox churches, with psalms, epistle and gospel readings fol-

lowed by the Creed, the consecration of the bread and wine, the Lord's Prayer and the communion. Only the sermon seemed out of place, coming at the end of the service instead of before the Creed, and lasting rather longer than most non-Orthodox sermons.

Archbishop Anatoly wore black, the symbolic colour for Lent, although after midnight tonight he will celebrate in white because the

came a mosque after the city fell to the Turks in 1453. After centuries of doctrinal debate, the excommunication was the final breach normally marking a great schism.

The schism centred on a phrase in the Creed, the filioque, meaning "and the son", which refers to the idea that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the father and the son. The filioque was added to the Nicene Creed in the sixth century and adopted at Rome soon after the year 1000, in spite of persistent opposition from the East.

But the two were already divided over Papal claims. The Roman church saw itself as the centre of unity for entire Christendom, while the eastern Christians believed the church consisted of five patriarchates of almost equal status. In a revised edition of his standard work on the Orthodox Church, to be published later this month, Timothy Ware, a fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, refers to the primacy of the sacraments in worship. "Orthodoxy rejects any attempt to diminish the materiality of the sacraments," he says. The Orthodox believe in metempsychosis, that during the consecration the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. Most Orthodox avoid the use of the Catholic term, transubstantiation, to describe this process.

At the service I attended, mysticism and symbolism were central to the liturgy, delivered in English and Church Slavonic, a language, like Latin, no longer spoken outside the church. Prayers for the Queen, royal family and government were in English, and the

beatitudes from Christ's Sermon on the Mount sung in Slavonic to an old chant.

A small relic of the venerated 9th-century patriarch, Paul of Constantinople, was brought to England from Mount Athos by the choir-master, Father Michael, and has been incorporated into the altar, set behind the iconostasis, a screen covered with icons. Over the altar burns the lampada, wicks in oil, symbolising prayers of supplication or intercession. The screen represents a window on to the transfigured world of the risen Christ in the sanctuary, and is beneath the half dome at the end of the white-washed church. Each wall was hung with many icons, most with candles or lampada before them.

Among the worshippers were a mother and daughter from Bulgaria, two Serbian women wearing headscarves and at least one convert from the Church of England. Before the service the icons were censed, with clouds of incense from a thurible on a long chain. The sanctuary was censed often during the service, and the congregation censed during the reading of the epistle and after the gospel. Worshippers often crossed themselves, from right to left, the opposite to other Churches.

The congregation received communion standing. Children can receive communion from baptism. They go to their first confession at seven, when they are considered to have become aware of sin.

The archbishop began his sermon with "Dear brothers and sisters", and asked us to think about the meaning the Church puts into its Lenten services.

It would be easy to think of this church, near to Harrods, behind the Roman Catholics' Brompton Oratory and the Anglicans' Holy Trinity, as an exotic import from the East bearing little relation to traditional British Christianity. But after these hours of concentration on penitence and mystery, with nothing to say but much to think about, Russian Orthodoxy seemed instead an embodiment of the universal spirit of Christianity as it was from the beginning.

● Sunday services: Liturgy 10.30am.



Lenten robes: Archbishop Anatoly conducts the Orthodox service

Disposable cameras are a neat and practical idea, but how good are the photographs? Nicole Swengley is in the picture

STEPHEN MARKESON

POINT, SHOOT AND HAND THEM BACK

BASIC (without flash)

● Kodak Fun 35mm, £5.49, preloaded with Kodak Gold II 400 ASA film, 24 exposures. Dimensions: 101mm x 38mm x 56mm. Weight: 127g. Stephen Markeson comments: easy to hold. Good lens resolution and depth of focus. The finished machine prints showed a slight green cast that made the pictures look "cold".

● Fujicolor QuickSnap Plus 3, £4.99, preloaded with Fujicolor Super G 400 ASA film, 27 exposures. Dimensions: 104mm x 25mm x 56mm. Weight: 127g. Stephen Markeson comments: easy to hold, good lens resolution and depth of focus. Finished machine prints were "cold" with a green cast.

● Konica Film-In, £4.99, preloaded with 35mm Konica Super SR 400 ASA film, 24 exposures. Dimensions: 119mm x 28mm x 56mm. Weight: 127g. Stephen Markeson comments: marginally easier to hold than the Kodak or Fuji. Good lens resolution and depth of focus. Very crisp results. Colour was good on finished machine prints. I was very impressed.

PANORAMIC

● Kodak Fun 35mm Panoramic, £7.99, with wide-angle lens, preloaded with Kodak Gold II 400 ASA film, 12 exposures. Takes 89mm x 254mm photographs. Dimensions: 101mm x 38mm x 56mm. Weight: 127g. Stephen Markeson comments: unnecessarily confusing viewfinder with fussy centre circle on lens. No explanation of its purpose. Not as nice to handle as the other panoramic cameras tested. But the finished results were stunning. Excellent edge-to-edge sharpness with good definition and depth of focus. I would be happy to get similar results on my professional camera.

● Fujicolor QuickSnap Panorama Plus 3, £7.99, with wide-angle lens, preloaded with Fujicolor Super G 400 ASA film, 15 exposures. Dimensions: 106mm x 30mm x 56mm. Weight: 141g. Stephen Markeson comments: the viewfinder was much easier to use than the Kodak. Comes a good second to the Kodak in finished print quality. Slightly "colder" finished print result but similar edge-to-edge sharpness.

● Konica Film-In Panorama, £7.99, with 17mm f/13.05 fixed wide-angle lens, preloaded with Konica Super SR 400 ASA film, 24 exposures. It has a shutter speed of 1/100sec and can be used on subjects as close as 30cm. Dimensions: 119mm x 30mm x 58mm. Weight: 141g. Stephen Markeson comments: very wide lens. Easy-to-use view-

finder. Finished print slightly "cold" and the sharpness was not edge-to-edge.

UNDERWATER

Stephen Markeson says: I was also asked to test underwater disposable cameras. Unfortunately, the editor would not sanction a trip to the Caribbean, so I cannot report fully on these. It is important to remember that these cameras are designed for use in bright sunny conditions and clear water. Their use in the local swimming pool may prove disappointing. The light levels would be too low and the cameras are loaded with daylight-sensitive film, not suitable for use under artificial light.

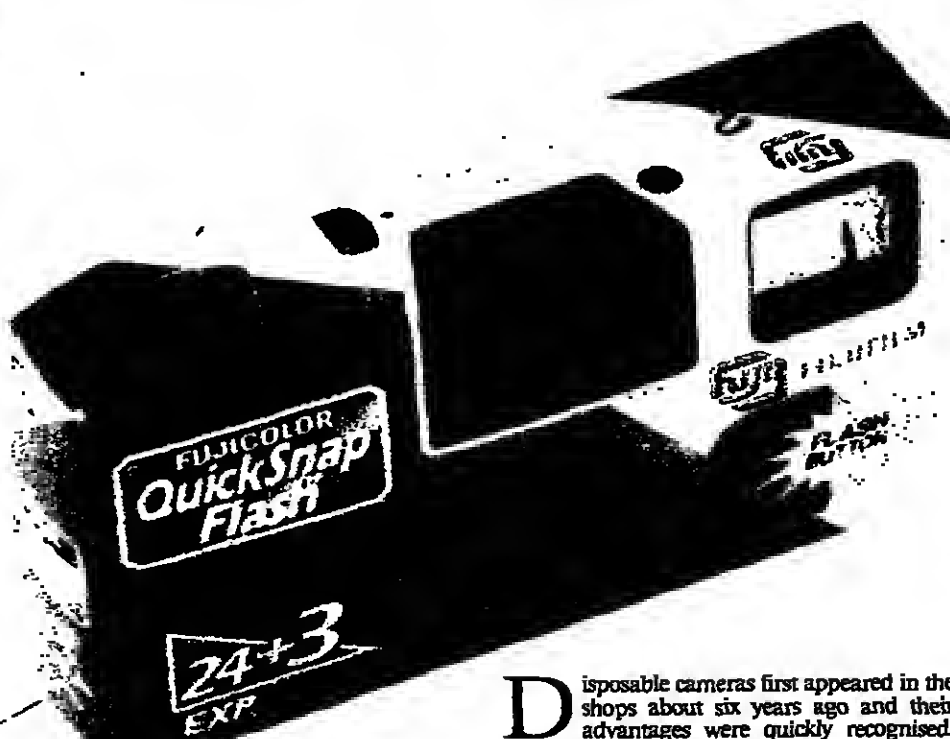
● Fujicolor QuickSnap Plus 3 Marine, £9.19, with wrist strap, preloaded with Fujicolor Super G 400 ASA film, 27 exposures. Watertight to 3m. Dimensions: 114mm x 51mm x 76mm. Weight: 198g. Stephen Markeson comments: Nice to handle, with a very clever, easy-to-use, large finger lever as a shutter release. Small magnifier on the film counter makes it easier to see under water.

● Kodak Fun Aquatic 35mm waterproof camera, £8.99, preloaded with Kodak Gold II 400 ASA film, 24 exposures. Designed to keep out rain or sand and waterproof to 24m. Dimensions: 101mm x 51mm x 56mm. Weight: 198g. Stephen Markeson comments: I thought the Fuji had a better design. Amusing misspelling in the instructions, "for picture taking outside by sunlight".

HOW TO USE

● Disposable cameras have fixed-focus, fixed-aperture lenses and one shutter speed. You wind on by turning a wheel, switch on the flash if required, aim, and press the shutter button. A counter indicates the number of exposures left. The preloaded 400 or 200 ASA films produce good pictures in a wide variety of light conditions.

A snip for snappers



Disposable cameras first appeared in the shops about six years ago and their advantages were quickly recognised. Now, as well as being cheap, easy to use, small and lightweight, they have become more sophisticated with flash, panoramic and underwater versions available.

Stephen Markeson, a staff photographer on *The Times*, put a selection through their paces. He says: "It must be remembered that these are simple point-and-shoot cameras and can only be expected to perform well under good lighting conditions. All the cameras produced results that exceeded my expectations." He also tested one of the latest cheap reusable cameras to compare its results with the disposable models.

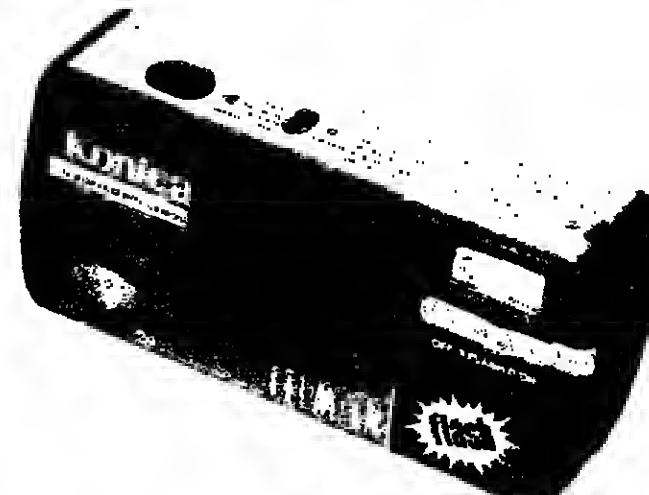
The cost of developing works out at 40p to 50p per print — about twice that of reusable cameras because you are paying for the camera as well as the film. Panoramic prints are even more expensive at about £1.30 each. Even so, a disposable camera is useful as a spare or for use in places where you would not risk taking a more expensive camera.

Fujicolor QuickSnap Plus 3 Flash (top, shown to scale), £7.99, preloaded with Fujicolor Super G 400 ASA film, 27 exposures. Dimensions: 117mm x 25mm x 56mm. Weight: 155g. Stephen Markeson comments: clever push switch on the front to charge the flash. Good, sharp results but with a green cast. The picture on the left was taken with this camera.

Vivitar Eco 35 (right), £9.99, a reusable 35mm camera with cord neck-strap, won an award from the Industrial Design Society of America. Preloaded with a 24-exposure Kodak Gold II 200 ASA film. Can be reloaded with a thumbwheel advance and manual rewind. Film view window shows film loaded, film type and number of exposures. Comes with operating instructions and one-year warranty. Dimensions: 107mm x 67mm x 40mm. Weight: 127g. Stephen Markeson comments: similar size to the disposables. Very good lens resolution and depth of focus. Finished machine prints were more pleasing than those from some of the disposable cameras as the colours were "warmer". The ecological advantages, mentioned in the instructions, of a reusable camera rather than a disposable seem moot. The picture on the far right was taken with this camera.



Kodak Fun 35mm flash (above), £8.99, preloaded with Kodak Gold II 400 ASA film, 24 exposures. Dimensions: 127mm x 30mm x 56mm. Weight: 170g. Stephen Markeson comments: the flash "ready" light was visible from the top of the camera and to the side of the viewfinder, which means you don't have to take your eye away from the viewfinder. To charge the flash you slide a button on the front. As with the other flash cameras tested, you need to take care not to cover the flash with your left hand when you take the picture. Good sharp results but a green cast to the finished prints gave a "cold" appearance.



Konica Film-In Flash (above), £7.99, preloaded with 35mm Konica Super SR 400 film, 24 exposures. Dimensions: 116mm x 30mm x 56mm. Weight: 170g. Stephen Markeson comments: unlike the other flash cameras tested you must remember to switch off the flash after use. Good lens resolution and depth of focus. "Warmer" finished print result was more pleasing than the Kodak or Fuji prints.



Building a safe haven for Tarka

Kari Knight visits the Otter Trust in Norfolk, where the species is thriving

Out on Far Marsh, two five-year-olds were getting excited. "Look," said one, "otter!" "Yes," sighed the other, her dreams come true. They ran off and chased the otters, which took off and flew away because, unfortunately, they were ducks.

But that's what you get when city children bring their understanding of the wild to a project as alien to them as the Otter Trust.

Far Marsh is part of the trust's 30-acre reserve in Earsham, Suffolk, close to the Norfolk border. The trust is one of 221 wildlife sites noted in *The Really Wild Guide to Britain*, an adjunct to BBC's popular natural-history series *The Really Wild Show*. The book gives details of wildlife sites geared to helping visitors to understand animals and their behaviour.

The trust was founded by Jeanne and Philip Wayne (now on his eighth book on otters), whose life's work has been the conservation and propagation of the threatened British otter. The numbers of otters in Britain have declined alarmingly during the past 30 years, as a result of modern farming methods and pollution, and the same is true of other parts of Europe.

The Waynes' pioneering breeding programme began at the Norfolk Wildlife Park in Great

Witchingham, where the Otter Trust was founded in 1971. Mr Wayne says: "I bred my first pair of otters in 1963. In those days the Ministry of Agriculture had a covey extermination programme, and the traps often caught otters, which would be shot for the skins. I said I would have them, and I either released them or kept them, and that was how I built up a stock of seven or eight."

Mrs Wayne adds: "In order to establish our reintroduction programme, it was necessary to find a suitable site. After looking for several years, we decided to sink all our funds into River Farm, which we bought in 1975. The farm is ideal because it borders the River Waveney."

"Rearing otters is a long process: an otter produces young when it has passed two years old, often only producing one or two cubs per litter. Then the cubs are reliant on the mother for nine months, during which time the slightest disturbance could be fatal. Mrs Wayne says: "An otter lives for seven years and only produces two litters in that time."

Today, the reserve has the largest collection of European and British otters in the world. To date it has recorded 32 successful breedings from 19 reintroductions into the wild, and in some parts of Norfolk



Day shift: otters at the trust live by day and have to be trained to revert to their natural nocturnal cycle before release into the wild

the numbers are back to what they were before the drastic decline in the 1970s.

Visitors to the trust are advised to arrive before noon, because that is when the otters are hand-fed with fish. Keeper Daniel Marshall says: "The mid-afternoon feed (at 3.30pm) isn't half as much fun because all the action happens at the back of the pens. This is when they have their main meal."

The pens are fronted by netting which allows youngsters to see the action — although Mr Marshall

warns: "Although the otters may look tame, they aren't. If I was to wear a heavy pair of trousers, they would be suspicious of my smell."

It is extraordinary that these creatures can be observed at such close quarters. Shy and secretive animals, they are nocturnal by nature. Before their release, the otters will be kept up to a year in special pre-release enclosures, where they will slowly revert to their nocturnal habits and behaviour.

After feeding time, the otters are not so easily spotted. However,

children can get a close look into two exhibition pens. The glass viewing panels are at child-height to allow a look inside a holt, and give the opportunity for contact.

The trust also has a collection of Asian short-clawed otters. These are not an endangered species, but thrive in captivity and can provide a lot of entertainment while busy about their enclosure. Older children will enjoy the eight-page nature trail, which makes learning fun; there is an education room which, Mrs Wayne is keen to point out, is

always open to the public. As well as the otters, there is a play area (not suitable for toddlers), a copse with muntjac deer enclosure, heronry, trout lake, many breeds of waterfowl, and a picnic area.

● *The Otter Trust, Earsham, Norfolk* (0986 993470) is on the A143, 1 mile west of Bungay, Suffolk. Open daily until the end of October. £5.50, children £2.50. The Waynes also run a 2.2-acre site in North Petherton, Launceston, Cornwall (0566 85646). The Really Wild Guide to Britain is published by BBC Books at £5.99.

GOOD GUIDES

- *UK Activity Holidays 94* (Charles Letts & Co. £4.50). Put together by the National Tourist Boards, this guide really stretches the imagination with things to do for adults and children.
- *An Activity Holiday Guide to Great Britain and Ireland* (RAC Publishing, £4.99). Useful but not as informative as the tourist boards' book.
- *Kid's Britain* (Piccolo, £3.99). Well researched and easy to use, although tends to be biased towards London.
- *...and Baby Comes Too* (Allpress Leisure Publications, £8.95). A comprehensive guide more than 500 establishments that cater for young children.
- *The Family Welcome Guide 1993* (Fontana, £5.99). This book, now in its tenth edition, aims to cover all bases with the emphasis on pubs, restaurants and accommodation.
- *Stay on a farm* (Charles Letts & Co. £5.95). The Farm Bureau has selected all the farms in this book, which have also been inspected by the National Tourist Board. An excellent value-for-money guide, with a wealth of rural knowledge and local history.
- *How to Have Stress-Free Family Holidays* (Bloomsbury, £12.99). An authoritative manual for the more adventurous traveller. Large section devoted to worldwide travel.
- *The Heinz Good Beach Guide 1993* (Verde, £6.99). The technical detail is rather difficult to relate to if you lack an understanding of EC guidelines, etc, but the book is a good back-up when touring.
- *The Usborne Book of London* (Usborne Publishing, paperback £5.50, hardback £6.95). This highly sophisticated guide to London, colourfully illustrated, with bird's-eye views of places drawn in cross-section, will whet the appetite of any child visiting London.

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How 56 Muslim casualties in siege town galvanised Western opinion against Bosnian Serbs

Reckoning time in valley of death

Tim Judah reconstructs the terror of the creeping barrage that killed or maimed everybody who could not run fast enough

HALF an hour after the shelling of Srebrenica began last Monday, the wounded were pouring into the hospital on carts, wheelbarrows, trolleys, anything that people could find. Dr Piet Willems began the selection. "Him, him, out; him, him, out, out." He was deciding who he would try to save and who would die.

The shelling began at 2.15pm. It was a perfect spring day in the small town which lies in a valley above the Drina river, which forms a natural frontier between Bosnia and Serbia. There were crowds of people on the main street snaking up through the centre to the town square, passing the little hospital and the post office, the school and the shattered building of Srebrenica Woman department store, which today is a guarded store of flour and other commodities that the UN has managed to talk past the Serbs.

The shelling was methodical. It started at one end of the main street and moved down the centre of the town, killing and maiming all those who could not run fast enough. The death toll was 56, including 15 children.

Dr Willems, a surgeon of the Belgian branch of the medical charity Médecins sans Frontières, was in the post office when it began. He was not posting a letter. The PTT, as it is known, had become the home and headquarters of the 11 Canadian soldiers and the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who form the UN contingent.

Their sleeping bags lay behind unused counters. The telephone booths, files, and probably stamps of a vanished land, Yugoslavia, were still there. "Muhammad, our helper, ran in shouting," Dr Willems said. "There are bodies all over the road. It's a massacre. We've got to get them to the hospital."

The old maternity clinic, a small three-storey building which passes now for the hospital, is across the road from the PTT. Just over 100 dying and wounded were brought in. Most of the dead were left where they lay until the shelling stopped, but some became entangled with the living, tossed on to the carts that carried them to the hospital. Those that died in the hospital were left on the floor. Outside a dead man lay on a cart. A dog slept underneath. Inside a child writhed in agony. The hospital wall was splattered with blood.

Two other doctors moved through the jammed corridors. There is no electricity in Srebrenica and only the makeshift operating theatre has lights powered by a generator. The doctors did what they could for the less seriously injured. "I was bandaging with a torch held in my mouth," Dr Norbert Scholzen says.

Monday had begun quietly. People were walking the streets, just as they did every day. The town was crisscrossed. Its prewar population was 6,500; today, there are 30,000 people there, mostly refugees from villages already conquered and torched by the Bosnian Serbs. Every habitable room in the town sleeps ten people, the classrooms of the town's school, now a refugee centre, each sleeps a hundred. In the rest of the shrinking Muslim-held enclave around the town there are believed to be another 20,000 locals and refugees.

The majority of those on the streets were men. The women were cooking, looking after their sick, their children, their elderly — and making parachute suits. "I noticed many people wearing shirts and trousers of this strange material," said Louis Gentile, of the UNHCR. "I thought they were rather stylish. Then someone told me they were made from the parachutes

from the American airdrops." In the school playgrounds, just off the main street, children were playing football, the older ones on one side of a fence and the younger on the other. Mr Gentile says that the next day, when the UN evacuated the wounded, their flesh still hung on the fence.

Mr Gentile, 29, a Canadian who had been in the town for a week, was in his car when the shelling began, trying to establish contact with the UNHCR in Kiseljak on his radio. He went into the PTT. In the first minutes it was not clear that this shelling was different from any another. Shells have fallen on Srebrenica for a year. Local doctors said that they had never had more than 40 wounded in a day, and those were some of the worst days. On Monday, they had more than 100 in half an hour.

Mr Gentile went to the shelter in the basement of the PTT to find it full of the local police. "We sent the cleaning women who work in the PTT down there, too," he said. The shelling was utterly calculated. It started at one end of town and in just over 20 minutes it had moved up the high street and then stopped. At about 4pm there was a renewed but less deadly barrage.

The pretty Serbian Orthodox church looks down benignly on the main square. Unlike a thousand mosques in Serb-held territory, it has not been dynamited. But unlike most houses in Muslim Srebrenica, it has not been damaged by Serb artillery.

As the shells crashed down, Srebrenica became a ghost

'Looking at the small body lying in the school playground, you think you should do something, you think you should pick it up and bury it, but you realise that would be desecration'

town. When the noise died down, Mr Gentile went out with the Canadian "blue beret" in their armoured personnel carrier and drove up the hill through the centre of the town. "A shell exploded 50 metres to our right," Mr Gentile says. "It took the roof off a house. I'm sure there were people in it. Then we passed the playground. I saw seven bodies, two were children, one was decapitated." He sucks in his breathe. "It's a cliché, I know, but the road was red with blood. That's it. I didn't want to believe what I was seeing."

A quarter of an hour later, the vehicle returned and passed the playground again. It stopped. "There was blood and guts everywhere. You think maybe you should do something," Mr Gentile said, referring to a small body that had lain before him. "You think, 'I should pick it up and bury it'. But the refugees were all inside the school. You realise they will come and bury it. It would be a desecration otherwise."

In the hospital Dr Willems began operating an hour after the shelling began. He was helped by an underqualified doctor who had done 1,200 such operations in the last year. Dr Willems, who had been in the town for 12 days, had never done war surgery and was terrified. The operating theatre was vulnerable to shelling, on the top floor, under the roof and with a window.

All the injuries were shrapnel wounds. Dr Willems managed seven operations on six men and two children before, at midnight, he ran out of sterilised instruments and his staff said they could do no more. The brain of one man was pouring from his eye. Dr Willems could not save him. "When he died, his brother



Road to freedom: crowds surrounding a UN convoy in Srebrenica, hoping for safe passage out of the Muslim town, and witnessed by one of the few foreign photographers there

said, 'We were a family of five sons. Four died today, him in the street and three on the front'."

Srebrenica has seen war before — but nothing like this. During the second world war the flag of Fascist Croatia flew on the bridge across the Drina and the Muslims wielded the whip. Serbs were killed and on the run, but nowhere in Bosnia was the war as brutal as today.

The name of the town derives from its only precious commodity: silver. In the Middle Ages the ancestors of the people of Srebrenica fought with the ancestors of their Serb besiegers. The kingdom of Bosnia was locked in war with the principality of Serbia. But the silver miners were Saxons, ancestors of the Germans. In 1460, the fighting subsided and Srebrenica fell into obscurity, a little hillside town with a mine deep in the Ottoman Empire, never to be heard of again in the outside world until today.

In 1991, Muslims were three-quarters of the local population and Serbs a quarter. But, as elsewhere in Bosnia, the Serbs owned a higher proportion of the land. They also needed — and need — the strategic Drina valley to weld all their territories into one.

Before Monday's carnage, Srebrenica was an island of fear. Now it is a land of terror. Everyone wants to leave. There is no more hope of resisting, only the hope of surviving. Last month General Philippe Morillon, the commander in chief of UN forces in Bosnia, told its people that he would not abandon them. The UN ordered him out but he decided to go back in. Serbs deployed crowds of women and children to block his way and prevented him from returning.

Srebrenica's people are unwilling martyrs. They thought they lived in modern Europe. Now they know that they do not, they just want to live. There is a precedent. There is Vukovar. When the Serbs entered that Croatian city, they made for the hospital, taking the wounded men out of the back as the International Committee of the Red Cross clamoured to get inside. Today, Russian troops guard what is believed to be their mass grave in the corner of a muddy field.

Before he left Srebrenica on Thursday, Dr Willems took a felt-pen marker and wrote numbers on the foreheads of the women and children who were to be evacuated. No hope for the men though. "They waved their hands at me, they said 'helicopter', 'evacuation' — the only words they knew in English," the doctor said.

In the Muslim cemeteries of the town, there are many freshly dug graves. "They know they will be able to fill them," Mr Gentile said. He recalled a man and woman standing in the churning dirt and dust as a UN helicopter prepared to winch their wounded little girl to safety. She died before she could be lifted inside. "The child was beautiful," he said. "The mother rocked. She was a beacon of sorrow."



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WHAT TO WEAR



Dressing down from the wig and gown

In a world where conduct unbecoming is anything other than a dark double-breasted or three-piece suit and sensible black brogues, Justin Gau, a barrister, welcomes any opportunity to leap into jeans and an old sweater. "Well, not exactly leap, stagger would be a more accurate description after a day in court," he says.

At home, Mr Gau, who specialises in fraud cases, pads about in socks. "I enjoy not having to wear shoes." He spends his weekends in the country. "I try not to trudge around too much outdoors, but I do have a thorn-proof jacket, which is probably bullet-proof as well." He sails, but admits that, in general, sailors don't have any taste. "Sailing clothes are hideous." He has a pair of trousers in a terracotta colour which are comfortable but universally loathed by friends. "I wear them all year round with a T-shirt, or three jumpers and a raincoat, depending on the weather."

When it comes to socks, Mr Gau and Dingle Clark, who share a set of common law chambers with Helen Carter and Camille Habboo, agree to differ. "I wouldn't trust anyone who wears socks other than black ones," says Mr Clark, a commercial law barrister. Mr Gau cheerfully admits to wearing coloured socks.

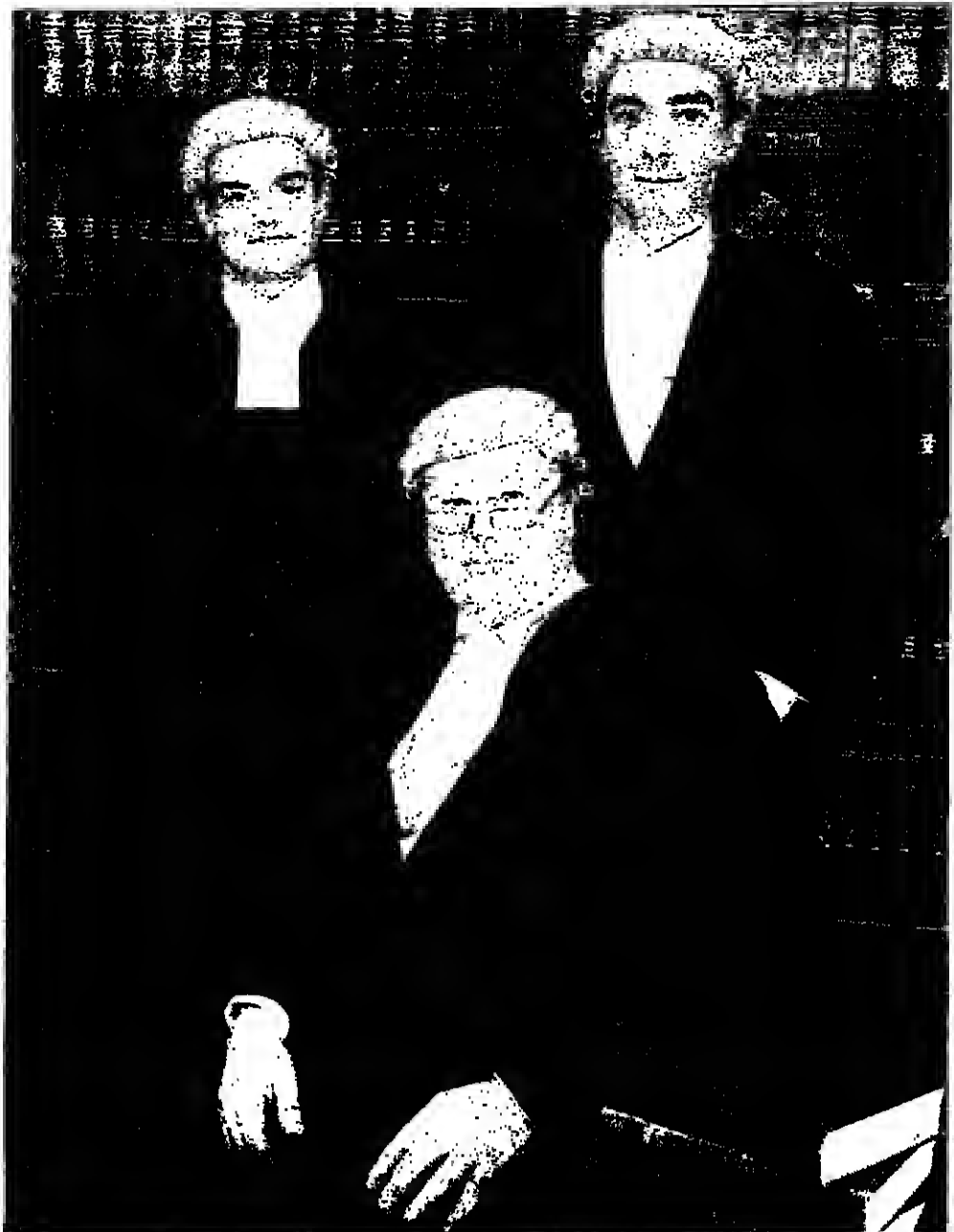
With a penchant for coloured ties to brighten up his dull suits, Mr Gau loved the one he is wearing in the off-duty picture on this page. "I wonder how much the tie cost. I think it was by Byblos, which is a new name to me. My limit on ties is between £20 and £25. Anything more than that seems outrageous."

"I also like Dingle's jacket in the picture. He looks quite surprising. I've seen him off-duty only in tweed jackets and comfy jumpers." Mr Clark thought the jacket was OK, but wasn't convinced about the colour. "Most of my casual jackets are blue or green. I don't think I'd buy anything bright red."

The loafer shoes and belt were his favourite items at the photo session. "They're exactly the kind of soft-soled shoes I like to wear at weekends. I have an old pair that used to be called 'brothel creepers'. These days it's probably pretty naïf to wear a belt, but I wear one all the time. I suppose I ought to buy braces, or wear trousers that fit properly."

Mr Clark spends weekends at his house in Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, plays golf and tennis, but doesn't like tracksuits.

After a hard day's work thinking on their feet before the bench, how do lawyers unwind? Five London barristers disrobe and sum up the case for more relaxed, colourful weekend wear. Sue Fox hears the evidence



ABOVE

From left, Justin Gau wears his own suit, available from Barrow Yarrow, 137 Upper Street, London N1; white shirt from A.J. Neale The Shirt Shop, 150 Fenchurch Street, London EC3; band from Ed & Ravenscroft, 93-94 Chancery Lane, London WC2. Peter St John Howe wears "some old tried and trusted friends" from the depths of his own wardrobe. Dingle Clark (right) wears his own herringbone suit, available from Mold and Russell, 61 High Street, Sidcup, Kent (081-302 5588); white shirt and band from Ed & Ravenscroft (as above).

Photographs by John Hudson, stylist Victoria Pymon, hair and make-up by Catherine Buxton for Clarins, fashion assistant Kate Wiggins. Photographed at 1 Dr Johnson's Buildings, Temple, London EC4, and El Vito's, 47 Fleet Street, London EC4.

"Shell suits are the worst. I've never met anyone who looked right in one," he says.

Mr Gau thinks Camille Carter and Helen Habboo look terrific in their off-duty gear. "We socialise a bit, but I'm so used to seeing them both in dark suits, I'd almost forgotten how lovely they can look." Mr Gau says his chambers is proud of Ms Carter, who has a formidable reputation as a runner. "This year she won the annual Law Challenge race around the City for women barristers. Off-duty, if Camille isn't in her running gear and sports things, she wears expensive, stylish clothes."

With the stores full of bright spring outfits in lime green, shopping can be unbearable for women barristers such as Ms Carter, whose work includes civil, personal injury, family matrimonial and criminal cases. "It's difficult to find a lightweight black suit or linen dress and jacket," she says. Court rules of dress insist that even a summer dress has to have a highish neckline and elbow-length sleeves.

For working clothes, Ms Carter shops at Marks & Spencer. Next and Jaeger, which have good selections of skirts and jackets to mix and match. She buys pure cotton or silk shirts. "I hate polyester," she says. "It's hot in court, especially under a gown, and part of a barrister's job is to think on your feet, which gets the adrenalin going. The last thing I want to worry about is sweating into a polyester shirt. Most of the male barristers I know send their collars to the laundry, but I quite like relaxing with an ironing board and spray starch at the weekends."

A "new man, of sorts", Mr Gau does all his own laundry and ironing. He is, he says, a boring, average size who hates shopping for clothes. "Every couple of months I buy something on impulse. I don't bother comparing prices and styles or 'Hand-wash/Dry-clean only' labels. If something looks interesting, comfortable and well made, I'll buy it."

Having to dress smartly for work is, he says, a bit of a pain. "Basically I'm rather a slob, and I'd much rather wear jeans or Gap trousers with an old jumper." He has a much-loved, upmarket shirt from Swaine, Adeney, Briggs & Sons, of Piccadilly. "I used to work there and was entitled to the staff discount," he says.

Having to stick to the same basic clothes makes Ms Habboo's choice easier. "I



can wear the same suit three days running, because the chances are I'll be in three different courts and never see the same people," she says. Although her photograph shows her wearing vibrant red lipstick to counteract the black and white, her working make-up is normally subdued. The minute she gets home, she changes into jeans. "I have lots of pairs in different colours — mostly Levi 501s. I wear them with bright Chanel-style

jackets — Monsoon is one of my favourite labels, and I've picked up some good hacking jackets from Oxfam shops. For weekends, I have a Dry-As-A-Bone coat, and I borrow my father's riding jacket or my boyfriend's hacking jacket. If I were going somewhere smart, I'd probably wear a bright pink Chanel-style suit with a short skirt and black polo neck. I'm lucky enough to have a good dressmaker, who makes suits for me. During the week I

wear black court shoes — the extra height gives me more confidence — otherwise I live in cowboy boots, or Bally shoes in subdued colours."

Mr Gau is sympathetic to women barristers and high heels, but says: "They wear them to look impressive in court but then complain that their shoes are killing them."

Ms Habboo wouldn't normally choose brown — "I usually go for bright pink" — but she loved the cut and fabric



SPORTING LIFE

Addicted to the long run

John Goodbody finds out what drives the 35,720 disparate individuals who have entered tomorrow's gruelling London Marathon

The obsession with running marathons is widespread and profound: it strikes the most unlikely people. When the NutraSweet London Marathon begins at Greenwich tomorrow, the 35,720 entrants will include such international names as Liz McColgan, who could earn £300,000 if she breaks the world record and finishes under 2 hours 20 minutes, as well as recreational joggers, some of whom might want to pay the organisers that amount of money just for the privilege of competing.

The success of the London race has been that the elite, the eccentric and the ordinary can run, or stumble, alongside one another in a camaraderie of endeavour. Andrew Paul, who plays PC Dave Quinlan in the TV series *The Bill*, describes completing the 26 miles 385 yards as "the ultimate physical challenge for the amateur athlete."

He should know. Two years

ago, he ran his first London Marathon. "I burst into tears with relief as I crossed the line after such a horrendous ordeal, and I looked round for someone else to share the moment. But nobody else was crying. They were too exhausted."

He swore to himself that 1991 was his last marathon. "However, after a few months, I began to get restless. I then started thinking that I might be one of those people who had become addicted to running. I have several friends like that."

He started jogging again, and tomorrow he will be one of the thousands who have to overcome handicaps, injuries and other difficulties to try to fulfil their ambition. Mr Paul suffers from hip and leg problems and also asthma, an affliction that sometimes forces him to stop when he becomes tight in the chest.

He works five days a week and often at weekends and sometimes has to be on the television set at 7am. More-



Pounding the beat: alongside the sporting elite and the recreational joggers, nine Essex police officers entered the 1991 marathon to raise money for medical charities

over, his youngest child has recently been suffering from the family's rest. However, he and his wife Laura, who took part in the British Telecom Swimathon last month, have managed to organise their training in the hope of completing a 1993 family double.

Until Chris Brasher's energy and enterprise initiated the London event in 1981, it was believed that running a marathon was only for the physically gifted. The public has always been fascinated by the mys-

tique of the marathon. There is its classical origin, with Pheidippides bringing the news of the victory of the Athenians over the Persians in 490BC, and the central role of the race in the modern Olympics, with Zatopek and Dorando Pietri, who collapsed and had to be helped over the line in the 1908 Olympics in London.

Mr Brasher used this mystique to encourage ordinary people to compete alongside, or at least behind, internation-

al athletes, and also to fulfil their physical potential in completing the course. Mr Paul says: "Of the hundreds of millions of people who have watched the race on television, almost everyone must have thought, 'I'd fancy doing that one day.'" So far 221,789 people have finished the race. Mr Brasher has always quoted the words of Robert Browning: "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" Heaven for Mr Paul would be to

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LEFT
From left, Dingle Clark wears denim shirt, £65, from Ralph Lauren, 143 New Bond Street, London W1; trousers by Ciao, £65, available from House of Fraser and Dickens and Jones; red gabardine jacket, £172, Rodier, 106 Brompton Road, London SW3. Peter St John Howe wears all his own clothes: olive green jumbo cords, cream cotton shirt, beige waistcoat, painted silk bow tie and chocolate brown suede brogues. Justin Gau wears pink shirt, £65, Ralph Lauren (as above); Byblos tie, £45, Browns, South Molton Street, W1; Pepe jeans, £35.99, available from nationwide stores (081-459 1277 for stockists); Dockside, £75.99, Russell and Bromley, 24-25 New Bond Street and branches. Camille Habboo wears blue denim Byblos shirt, £60, Browns (as above); red Pepe jeans £39 (as above); Dockside, £69, Russell and Bromley (as above). Helen Carter wears taupe body, £35, Mulberry Gees, Court Street, St Christopher's Place, London W1; taupe trousers, £75, Mulberry (as above); checked jacket, £335, Quintessence, 48 High Street, Reigate, Surrey; shoes, £150, Ralph Lauren (as above).

BELOW
Helen Carter (left) wears her own black suit, available from Marks & Spencer branches nationwide; white shirt and band from Ede & Ravenscroft (as above); black shoes from Bally, available from stores nationwide. Camille Habboo wears her own suit from Jigsaw, 65 Kensington High Street, London W8 and branches; black shoes from Bally.



of the hour-style trousers and jacket she wore for the photograph. "They're both by Mulberry and seem expensive, but I'd be interested."

The leg robe-makers Ede and Ravenscroft — known affectionately by much of the court fraternity as "Greed and Ravingscroft" — has made a three-piece trouser suit for women barristers. "I wouldn't wear it," Ms Carter says. "Trousers don't look professional, and the ruffled blouse is

awful. Women barristers have to wear bands on a little bit, which would look silly with ruffles."

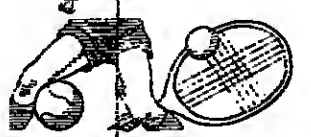
Peter St John Howe, who specialises in commercial law, thinks women barristers have had a civilising effect on the profession. "They've beaten the men hands down with their splendid variations on the black and white theme. Some of them are quite ingenious at creating a spectacularly different look — hussar frogging on

black velvet, silk facings on the pockets, interesting cuffs. It's amazing what can be done."

At weekends, Mr St John Howe puts away his eight dark, bespoke double-breasted suits, with snazzy bow ties from Turnbull and Asser, and relaxes in sloppy-joe trousers or cords and a sports jacket. His sailing clothes are an old Guernsey sweater and reefer jacket. "I'm not a fashion-conscious casual dresser," he says. Sadly, I can no longer get

into my cavalry twills, and I'm too much of a pear shape to wear jeans. I'm not interested in modern clothes. I like wearing the ones I've had for years.

"If I go out for a drink at the weekend I usually wear grey flannel baggy trousers and a sports jacket or blazer. For travelling to chambers, I wear an overcoat and, depending on the weather, a hat from Bates. But at home I go around in a second world war dispatch rider's leather jerkin."



In for a stretch: Andrew Paul of *The Bill* (left) trains for the marathon he doesn't want to run



finish the race in less than four hours, and then hobble across London to watch Arsenal win the Coca-Cola Cup final at Wembley.

When runners are not actually exercising, most are discussing their injuries, ways to improve, and how they could set a personal best if only fate were not set against them. Training schedules are analysed and passed around for admiration, as children do with a new computer toy.

Mr Paul says: "There are so many conflicting ideas on marathon training. One is that you have to run at least 50 miles a week. I tried this last time, when I did four hours 11 minutes, and became obsessed with the 50 miles, sometimes running as late as 1am or as early as 4am. It did not benefit me." Now he listens to his own body and fits his training round his work, taking three runs a week, two eight-to-ten millers and one longer session.

Although a steady pace is usually advised for distance events, he plans to run the first 18 miles slightly faster than his average pace and then hopes to be far enough towards the finish to be inspired to achieve his target. Like everyone else, he will take regular sips of water from the 750,000 bottles at the drink stations, because long-distance runners always fear dehydration as they focus on the finish. He says: "This marathon will really be my last one. Perhaps I have a deep-rooted lack of confidence which makes me want to punish myself."

Perhaps, like so many of tomorrow's runners, he will still be coming back for more punishment in 1994, and in the years to come. Marathon running is a true addiction.

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CITY OF ANGELS: Top quality Larry Gelbart/Coleman musical with a private eye theme. Prince of Wales, Coventry Street, W1 0J7. 839 5972. Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed, Sat, 2.30pm.

DON'T FOOL WITH LOVE/THE BLIND MEN: Cheek by jowl arrive in London with their touring version of Alfred de Musset's tempestuous love-triangle, preceded by a neat curtain-raiser by Shalendero. Donmar Warehouse, Earlham Street, WC2 0J7. 1967 1150. Previews Tues, Wed, 7.30pm; opens Thurs, 7pm; then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Sat, 2.30pm.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST: Maggie Smith commands the brittle world of lost handbags in this elegant revival. Aldwych, WC2 0J7. 836 6404. Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed, Sat, 2.30pm.

A JOVIAL CREW: Max Stafford-Clark's marvellous discovery of a play about the lure of the vagabond life, written on the eve of the Civil War. The Pit, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2 0J7. 838 8891. Previews tonight, Mon-Wed, 7.15pm; opens Thurs, 7pm.

LION IN THE STREETS: Julie Legrand, Sonia Miller, Kerry Shale are among the cast of an imaginative play by Judith Thompson where the ghost of a murdered girl searches for her killer in Toronto. Hampstead, Swiss Cottage Centre, NW1 0J7. 1-722 9301. Previews tonight, 8pm, opens Mon, 7pm, then Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Sat (from April 24), 4pm.

ON THE LEDGE: Alan Bleasdale's arresting vision of inner city collapse, with characters all just about to jump. National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 0J7. 928 2252. Previews from Thurs, 7.30pm, opens April 27, 7pm.

THE TREATMENT: Jacqueline Defferay plays the distressed wife in Martin Crimp's new play in which a couple try to (film her story). Royal Court, Sloane Square, SW1 0J7. 730 1745. Previews tonight, Mon, 8pm; opens Tues, 8pm; then Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Sat (from next Sat), 4pm.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME: Chris Martin's adaptation of Victor Hugo's Gothic tragedy of a hunchback, a peal of bells and the lovely Esmeralda. The Hunchback of Notre Dame. New Victoria Theatre, Etruria Road (0782 717962). Opens Wed, 7.30pm; then Mon-Thurs, Sat, 7.30pm, Fri, 8pm, mat Sat, 2.30pm.

SCARBOROUGH: This year's main production is Ayckbourn's revival of his marvellously clever trilogy The Norman Conquests. The plays can be seen in any order. Table Manners previews from Wednesday (7.30pm), Living Together from April 28 (7.30pm), and Round and Round the Garden from May 12 (7.30pm). All three open in late May and play in repertoire until September. Stephen Joseph Theatre in the Round (0723 370541). Mon-Fri, 7.30pm, mats (from May 22) Sat, 3pm.

SOUTHAMPTON: Jason Connery bullies Louise Gold and wins her heart in Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew. Set in a 1930s museum. Nuffield, University Road (0703 671771). Previews from Thurs, 7.30pm, opens April 27, 7.30pm; then Mon-Thurs, 7.30pm, Fri, Sat, 8pm, mat Sat (May 15), 2.30pm.



Petty criminal: Dustin Hoffman stars in Stephen Frears's *Accidental Hero* (see Film)

FILM

ACCIDENTAL HERO (15): Promising satire on hero worship, marked by a grating Dustin Hoffman performance and a director (Stephen Frears) not in total control. With Andy Garcia, Geena Davis. MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096). Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) West End (0426 915574) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

BODY OF EVIDENCE (18): Predatory murder suspect Madonna hooks defence lawyer William Bofew. Silly, sleazy attempt to rival Basic Instinct. Director, Uli Edel. MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096). MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Leicester Square (0426 915683) Marble Arch (0426 914601) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

INDOCHINE (12): Love in a hot climate. Catherine Deneuve and gorgeous images carry the day. Regis Wargnier directs. Curzon West End (071-439 4805) Odeon Kensington (0426 914666).

LEAP OF FAITH (PG): Hard-going drama with Steve Martin as an evangelical comm. Director, Richard Pearce. MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2630) MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Plaza (071-437 1234) (97 9999) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

ONE FALSE MOVE (18): Excellent rural film now from director

MUSIC

OPERA

NORMA: Scottish Opera launches its summer season with its first ever production of Bellini's Norma. Ian Judge directs; the company's music director John Maucon conducts. In an impressive cast, Jane Eaglen brings her powerful soprano to the title role, while Katherine Ciesinski sings Adalgisa. The opening night is a gala in aid of Crusaid, Scotland. Theatre Royal, Glasgow (041-332 9000), Wed, 7.15pm.

JENUFA: Yuri Lyubimov returns to revive his production of Janáček's grim tale. David Atherton conducts a strong cast that includes Nancy Gustafson in the title role. Royal Opera House, London, WC2 0J7. 240 1066/1911, Tues, Thurs, 7.30pm.

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE: A chance for London audiences to see Welsh National Opera's acclaimed new Wagner staging, directed and designed by Yannis Kokos. Anna Evans and Jeffrey Lawton are the lovers, Della Jones sings Brangäne. Sir Charles Mackerras conducts. Royal Opera House (as above), Mon, Fri, 8pm.

ROCK

JIMMY CLIFF: With reggae back in vogue (three singles in the top ten this week), Cliff's timing is impeccable. A welcome opportunity to hear this Jamaican star. Brighton Academy, London, SW9 0J7. 326 1022, Thurs, 7pm.

NEW MODEL ARMY: The politically-aware rockers showcase their passionate album, The Love of Hopeless Causes. They have also just released their rousing version of "Gimme Shelter" with Tom Jones. In aid of the homeless. Birmingham, Hummingbird (021-236 4236), Wed, 7pm. Newcastle, Mayfair (091-232 3109), Thurs, 7.30pm. Glasgow, Barrowlands (031-557 6969), Fri, 7.30pm.

ELAINE PAIGE: The singer embarks on a national tour to promote her new album, Romance And The Stage. Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham (0602 482626), Fri, 7pm.

JAZZ

BIHEKI MISELEKU: The South African composer, pianist and saxophonist, who came to prominence last year with his stunning debut album,

DANCE

DON QUIXOTE: The cranes have not taken kindly to the Royal Ballet's latest production, but the public has been lapping it up. And no wonder, since it provides plenty of opportunities for display dancing, set against the elegant and spare designs of Muriel Thompson. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2 0J7. 240 1066, tonight, 7.30pm.

LONDON CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE: The company's annual season at its home base presents new works by 36 LCDT dancers. Music includes three original commissions from British composers. David Béné, Marc Cynil and Damien Le Gassid, and Adam Stones. The Place Theatre, 17 Oule's Road, London WC1 0J7. 387 0161, tonight, 8pm.

EXHIBITIONS

LONDON

CARICATURES FROM THE GIBSON BEQUEST: Frank Aubrey Gibson, who worked for The Times between 1918 and 1941, was a great collector of printed caricatures from between 1780 and 1850. Some 60 of them are exhibited here. Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, SW7 0J7. 938 8500. Mon, midday-6pm, Tues-Sat, 10am-5.50pm, Sun, 10am-5.50pm, opens Wed to September 12.

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR: The president of the Royal Academy, Roger de Grey, is 75 this year. To celebrate, there is a show of his series of paintings, Interior: Exterior, inspired by his studio and the orchard outside. Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, W1 0J7. 439 7438, Daily, 10-11am, 4-6pm, opens Tues to June 6.

GEORGIE O'KEEFE/JAMES TURRELL: An odd mating brings together O'Keeffe (1887-1986), leading figure of the American avant-garde, and Turrell (born 1943), who works in pure light. Hayward Gallery, South Bank, SE1 0J7. 921 0873. Daily, 10am-6pm (Tues, Wed to 8pm), until June 27.

GEORGES BRAQUE - PRINTS: Braque concentrated on print-making only after 1945 when he produced some of his most familiar images. Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1 0J7. 821 1313. Mon-Sat, 10am-5.50pm, Sun, 2-5.50pm, until June 27.

REGIONAL

RECENT BRITISH SCULPTURE: The South Bank Young show celebrates the achievements of the sculptors who came to international fame in the 1980s. Derby Museum & Art Gallery, Strand, Derby (0332 255596), Tues-Sat, 10am-5pm, Mon, 11am-5pm, Sun, 2-5pm, until May 9.

PANORAMIC VIEWS OF ST PETERSBURG: Included are prints ranging from 1716 to 1835, which give a blow-by-blow account of the city's expansion. Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford (0865 278000). Tues-Sat, 10am-4pm, Sun 2-4pm, until May 9.

BOOKINGS

LEONARDO: Leonardo da Vinci is the subject of a new musical based on a combination of fact and interpretation of events in the painter's life. The production reveals the tragic story behind the "Portrait of Love". Musical arrangements by John Cameron. Strand Theatre, London, WC2 0J7. 240 0300. Previews from May 21, opens June 3.

GEORGIE FAME: Fame's recent rhythm 'n' blues albums Cool Cat, Blues and the Blues and Me, recorded on Ben Sidran's Go Jazz label, featured the cream of New York's R'n'B players. These American session players will accompany Fame on his Silk Cur City Jazz tour in July. Birmingham, Town Hall (021-236 2392), 5. Manchester, The Ritx (061-236 7110), 6. London, The Grand (071-738 9000), 7. Edinburgh, Queen's Hall (031-668 2018), 8.

NEW VIDEOS:

THE CRYING GAME (PG): Director Neil Jordan raced back into favour with last year's most talked-about British film, a complex tale of love, jealousy and sexual secrets. With Stephen Rea as the IRA gunman, 1992.

STRICTLY BALLROOM (PG): One dancer's fight to defy the rules of the Australian Ballroom Dancing Federation. Excellent, intoxicating, escapism from Aussie theatre wizard Baz Luhrmann, 1991.

Film: Geoff Brown; Theatre: Jeremy Kingston; Opera: Ian Brunst; Rock and Jazz: Stephanie Osborne; Dance: Debra Crane; Exhibitions: John Russell Taylor; New Videos: Geoff Brown; Bookings: Ian Wright

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 18

KISSAR

(a) The East African bowl lyre, adapted from the colloquial Arabic *kissar* (Greek *kithara*), the bowl lyre of East Africa, a survival of the ancient Greek lyre, is still found in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda. The body is shallow, of wood, covered with a sheepskin membrane laced to the back of the body.

PUKU

(a) The stomach, the belly, from the Maori W. B., *Where White Man Treads*, 1905: "The Maori is pre-eminently gifted in the selection of suitable nomenclature. He needs a name. He looks him over. If he be massive in girth, what so delicate as reference thereto as puku (stomach)?"

COCCINELLA

(b) A beetle of the genus so named or its family Coccinellidae, a ladybird, modern Latin from Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae*, 1758, from the Latin *coccineus* scarlet: "It is fortunate that in most countries the children have taken these friendly coccinellae under their protection."

TAMEIN

(a) A draped garment resembling a sari, usually worn by women from the Burmese, also Anglicised as *tamien*, *ta-mien* and *tamain*: "She wore her blue tamien girdled above her breasts, leaving her beautiful pale shoulders bare."

SAMPLE ONE OF THE MOST EXCLUSIVE RESTAURANTS IN PARIS AND TAKE IN THE MATISSE EXHIBITION WITH OUR SPECIAL OFFER



Dynamic duo: diners will meet Joël Robuchon and Patricia Wells

The art of dining on the day trip

The Times invites readers to experience one of the most exclusive restaurants in Paris. Joël Robuchon's Restaurant Jamin, where one usually has to book weeks in advance, has been specially reserved for a lunch for readers of The Times on May 27.

Not only that, readers will also receive the book of M Robuchon's culinary secrets, *Cuisine Actuelle*, written by Patricia Wells, and a ticket for the Henri Matisse exhibition at the Pompidou Centre, the leading arts event of the year.

As if Paris in the spring were not excuse enough to cross the Channel, the chance to take in the Matisse exhibition makes our offer all but irresistible, particularly as the show is not coming to Britain.

Flying by British Airways, readers will take off from Heathrow at 7.30am and on arrival at Charles de Gaulle airport your host will escort you on a one-hour sight-seeing tour of the French capital.

Over a champagne reception at the Restaurant Jamin readers will meet Joël Robuchon, the Michelin three-star chef, and Patricia Wells, the author of *Cuisine Actuelle* — and you will receive a signed copy of the book worth £25.

Lunch, with the menu masterpieces with accompanying wines — specially prepared for Times readers by Joël Robuchon, follows.

After lunch there will be time to visit the Matisse exhibition at the Pompidou Centre, the most important art exhibition in Europe this year. Readers will have priority entry tickets.

On show are 140 works, painted by Matisse between 1904 and 1917, including important pictures specially loaned from the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow.

Alternatively your time is free to go shopping.

The transfer for the return flight will leave the Pompidou Centre at 6pm in time for your flight, arriving at London Heathrow at 8.35pm.

The price for this exclusive offer is £260 per person and includes insurance, return flights and transfers; the services of a host; lunch and wines at the Restaurant Jamin-Joël Robuchon; a copy of *Cuisine Actuelle* by Patricia Wells personally signed by Joël Robuchon, and priority entry to the Matisse exhibition.

To take advantage of this offer call the Regent Travel Services reservation hotline 081-960 9066 today. The offer is limited to a maximum of 48 places and all bookings will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis.

Regent Travel Services Ltd ABTA C5278 ATOL 2738

Three-star feast in Paris

Robin Young reports on a visit to Jamin, Joël Robuchon's restaurant

Joël Robuchon is reckoned, by most of the few who are in any position to know about such things, to be the best chef in the world. He is the three-star chef, the one to whom all pay tribute, the one whom the Gault-Millau guide has declared to be "Chef of the Century", and the one whom the Michelin guide promoted to three-stars within a record-breaking 28 months of opening his own restaurant.

At present it is necessary to book weeks or months ahead if you want to get a table at Robuchon's place, which is Jamin, in the Rue de Longchamp, in a quiet and well-heeled residential quarter of Paris's 16th arrondissement.

The waiting lists are only likely to get longer, not shorter, now that M Robuchon's culinary secrets have been made the subject of a book, compiled over four painstaking years by the American food writer, Patricia Wells.

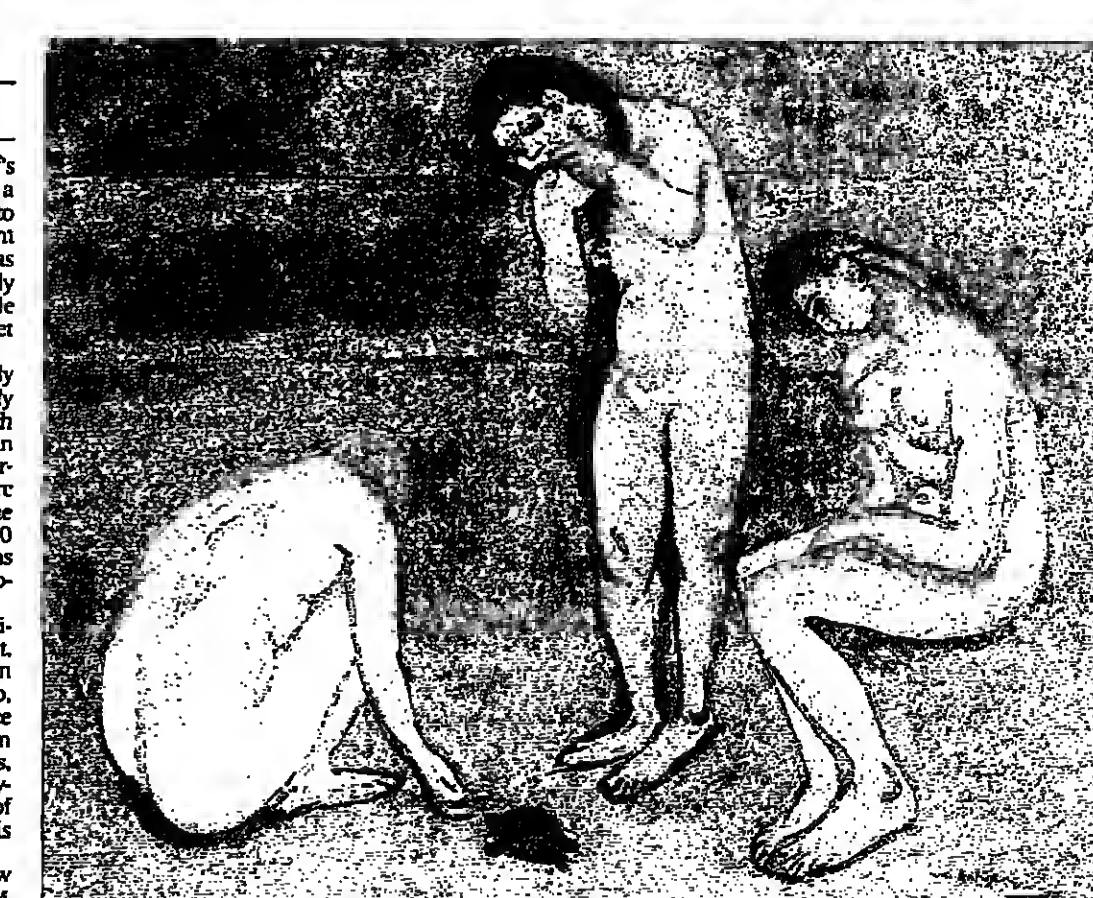
The book, published here this month by Macmillan at £25 under the title *Cuisine Actuelle*, has already been moving from the shelves like hot buns in America, where it is called *Simply French*, and has sold more than 50,000 copies in France under the title *Le Meilleur et Plus Simple de Robuchon*.

It has the unique selling point of offering the world's greatest chef's recipes written for home cooks by a home cook, so it may translate into something more like restaurant cooking in some homes than has ever been seen before. More likely still, though, it will have people from more homes fighting to get into the restaurant.

Though M Robuchon is shortly due to quit his comparatively modest quarters at Jamin for much more grandiose accommodation in a listed building now being refurbished next to the luxury Parc Victor Hugo hotel on Avenue Raymond Poincaré, the 1,000 square metres of space he gains there will not be used to accommodate extra customers.

At present Jamin serves a maximum of just 48 in the restaurant, and another 14 in a private salon upstairs. The new restaurant, too, will serve precisely 62, using a force of 40 staff to do it. The extra room will be used to enlarge the kitchens, the space between tables, everything indeed but the number of people for whom M Robuchon is prepared to cook.

Worse still, from the point of view of those anxious to sample M Robuchon's legendary preparations without attempting to knock them up in their own kitchens from Mrs Wells's fastidious transcriptions, the word is out in Paris that the obsessively dedicated M



Priority ticket: see the Bathers with a Turtle painted by Matisse in 1908 at the Pompidou Centre

Robuchon intends to hang up his chef's toque and apron for good on his fiftieth birthday.

That falls all too soon, on April 7, 1995 to be precise. If the rumour is right, there are not many sittings left.

Does it matter? Can any one chef be that special? Suffice it to say that I accompanied a small party of British food and restaurant critics to lunch at Jamin, and it is not inappropriate to say that they were all gobsmacked.

Robuchon's sea urchin and fennel soup, Elizabeth Jane Howard hailed as "the most exciting soup I have ever had". A *marinière de coquillages* which followed was, Derek Cooper roundly declared in the authoritative tones of Radio 4's *Food Programme*, "absolutely superb". Roast guinea fowl: "just wonderful". The potatoes and piquantly salted foie gras served alongside: "perfection". Salad: "sublime". Purée of La Ratte du Touquet potatoes (Robuchon's famous mashed potatoes which are twice sieved and half butter): "incredible".

The Michelin guide defines two-star cooking as "worth a detour", and three-star as "worth a journey". There was no disagreement among our privileged party that

Robuchon's cooking was well worth the day-trip to Paris.

Whether we could reproduce it from the pages of a book everyone doubted, but Mrs Wells was enthusiastically encouraging.

Mrs Wells is no pushover. She is the restaurant critic of the *International Herald Tribune*. Previously she was restaurant critic of *L'Express* and food writer for *The New York Times*. Her *Food Lover's Guides* to Paris and France were best-selling classics in their genre.

"I now divide my life as a cook," she writes in her foreword, "into distinct periods: Before Robuchon and After Robuchon. For this chef — modest and self-effacing, reflective, intuitive and driven — has changed for ever the way I approach even the most basic tasks in my kitchen."

What has he taught her? "That the greatness of a cook can be measured by the ability to work magic with the simplest of ingredients... that although perfection may be unattainable, that's no excuse for not seeking it... and a philosophy that will serve a lifetime."

Here, then, are some practical tips culled from Patricia Wells's gospel of guru Robuchon's teachings:

● common table salt masks fla-

vours, sea salt draws out and intensifies them;

● taste every step along the way, to ensure well-measured flavouring;

● season meat poultry and meat immediately before cooking and again immediately afterwards;

● roast poultry with the breast end towards the back of the oven, which is generally hotter;

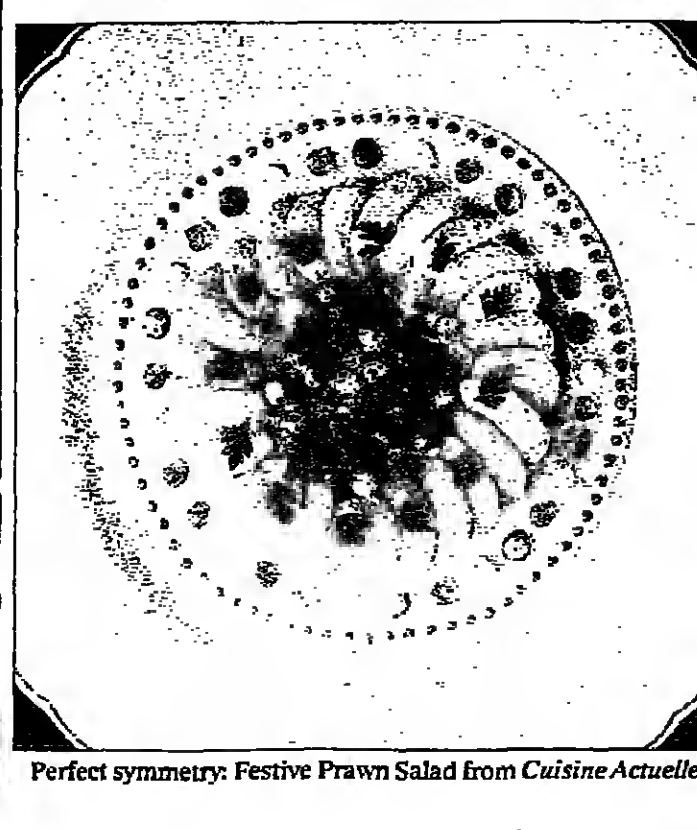
● a touch of lemon juice enhances the true flavour of freshly sautéed mushrooms;

● parsley leaves snipped with scissors will have more flavour than the same herb chopped with a knife;

● use sugar cubes when preparing jams and marmalades because they are the most refined and pure sugar of all.

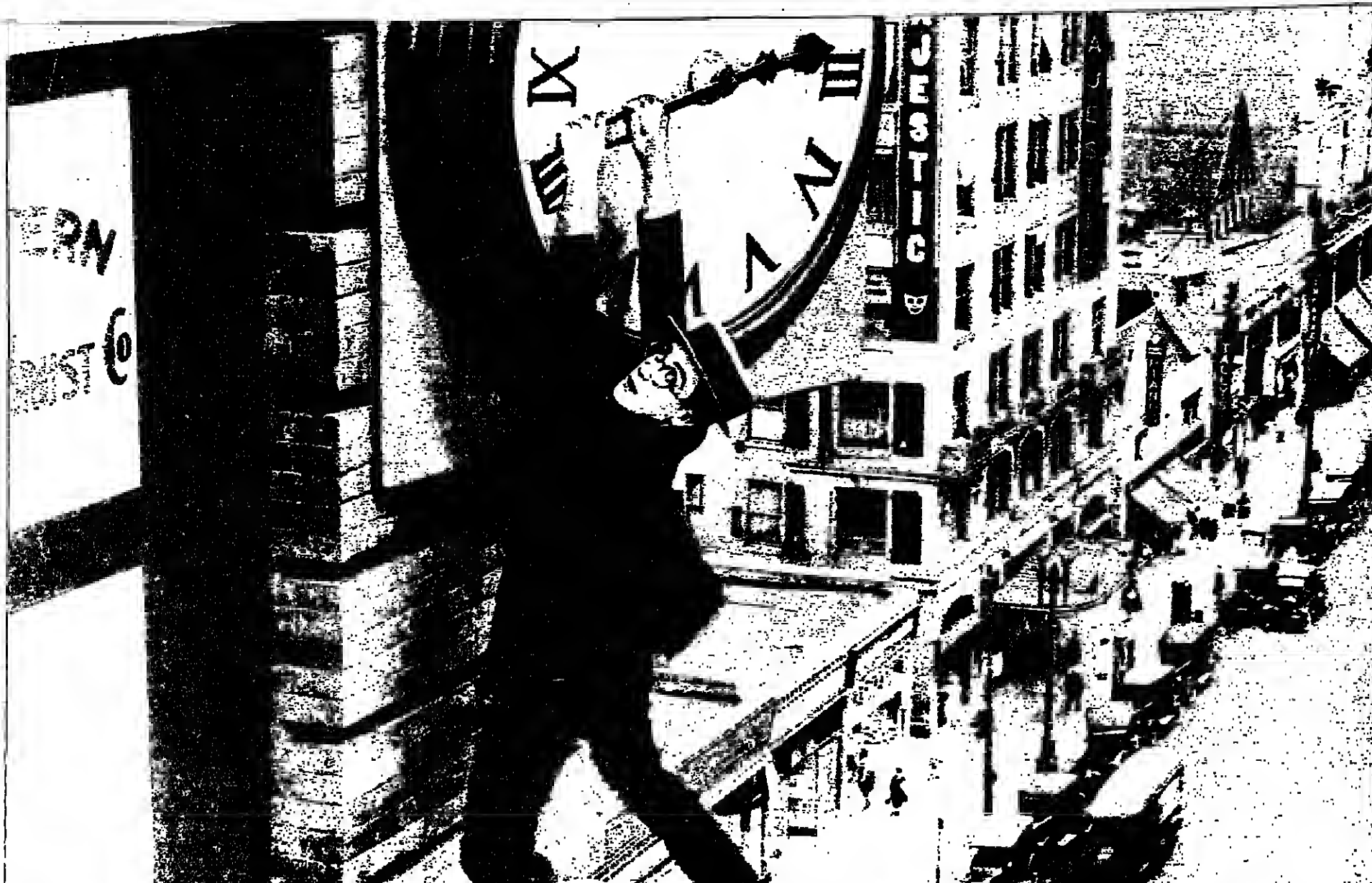
And here is a last one which the master gave me himself. It is the Robuchon way of improving *pommes frites*, or even British chips. Salt them twice, once lightly with very finely ground Maldon sea salt which will be absorbed into the chips' surface, and a second time with a few unground sea salt flakes for small explosions of tangy saltiness as you eat. I did this regularly now in my own kitchen. I am a convert, you see.

● *Cuisine Actuelle*: Patricia Wells presents the cuisine of Joël Robuchon. Macmillan, £25.



Perfect symmetry: Festive Prawn Salad from *Cuisine Actuelle*

CINEMA: David Robinson salutes the centenary next week of the comic genius Harold Lloyd



A man whose time had come: Harold Lloyd clings to the clockface of a skyscraper in *Safety Last*, a film he made with a screenplay by Hal Roach and Sam Taylor in 1923

There is a photograph from a silent film of 70 years ago that everyone still knows — a nightmare vision imprinted in the folk memory. The photograph shows a young man in a straw hat and horn-rimmed glasses hanging perilously from the hands of a clock, hundreds of feet above a busy street. His face is frozen in terror. The Californian sun shines down. The sky-signs on the buildings unfeelingly advertise Clothes on Credit and Smart Hats for Smart Ladies.

The young man is Harold Lloyd, who was born 100 years ago on Tuesday. The film was *Safety Last*, which created a new genre, the comedy of thrills, in which it has never been surpassed. A revival at the Dominion Theatre four years ago showed that today's audiences still succumb to the peculiar, escalating hysteria the clock sequence has always provoked, a ticklish combination of terror and wild hilarity.

Lloyd was one of the great mummivales of silent screen clowns, though his films consistently made far more money at the box office than those of either Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton. Unlike them and most of their contemporaries in screen comedy, he did not come from vaudeville.

He started life as a small-town boy in Nebraska, where his father's undeviating failure at every business he attempted somewhat undercut his mother's social aspirations. She was, however, stagestruck, and passed on the passion to her son. As a teenager Harold started to work as an actor in

stock companies. When his parents finally split up he accompanied his father to California, and supplemented his earnings as a stage actor by working as a film extra.

At Universal Studios he became friends with another young extra, Hal Roach, who was only a year older but had already enjoyed a varied career as gold prospector, mule skinner, saloon gambler and haulage man. Roach now had ambitions to be a film producer, and a \$3,000 legacy enabled him to set up his own company, with Lloyd as his star. Lloyd remembered that Roach's instructions to him were "Think up some funny get-up and let's get busy".

Obviously Lloyd created a character called Willie Work, who was a shameless imitation of Chaplin's tramp. The films were bad and Roach and Lloyd separated after a disagreement about money.

They were later reunited, to invent a new and slightly better character for Lloyd called Lonesome Luke. The few Lonesome Luke films that survive now seem crude and unfunny, but audiences liked them and Roach and

Lloyd made around 60 one-reelers — together with a small fortune — between 1915 and 1917.

Then Lloyd discovered the horn-rimmed glasses and a new character. He claimed that he was inspired by a dramatic film about a fighting parson who was a mild, bespectacled man until some wrong to be righted, or cause to be championed turned him into a fighting fury.

Between 1917 and 1921 the character was developed and refined through more than 80 one- and two-reel films. Lloyd's career almost came to an abrupt end in 1919 when a comedy bomb went off in his hand, removing his right thumb and forefinger and permanently affecting his sight. He later adopted a prosthetic glove for filming, and in 1921 embarked on his first feature.

His films generally followed the same formula. Harold begins as an effusive, cowardly, shy or otherwise psychologically handicapped young man; but — usually from the need to impress a girl — conquers his

handicap and triumphs. In *Grandma's Boy* he overcomes chronic timidity to worst the town bullies; in *The Freshman* the college weed rises to the occasion and carries the football team to victory; and in the incomparable *The Kid Brother* the runt of a tough family foils the villains.

Lloyd often chose spectacular inanimate co-stars, like the locomotive that crushes his car in *For Heaven's Sake*, or the horse-drawn streetcar of the climactic chase in *Speedy*. He never found a better co-star than the skyscraper in *Safety Last*, which involves Harold changing places with a "human fly" for an exhibition skyscraper ascent.

As he climbs the hazards multiply. He attracts the keen interest of a flock of pigeons, gets entangled in a net, is assaulted by a painter's trestle and is knocked off a ledge by a swing window. Then comes the clock. Harold grabs the minute hand which threateningly descends to "half past". At which point the clock itself comes a drift. This is nightmare indeed.

What most distinguishes Lloyd

from the other great film comedians — Chaplin, Keaton, W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers — is that their screen characters were extraordinary. Lloyd personified the ordinary. The pale young man with horn-rims, toothy smile, straw hat, clothes neat but cheap and irrepressible go-getting optimism, was the boy next door, the man in the next office, every obliging store clerk.

Harold was an archetypal character for America of the Twenties, with its confidence in a society of endless opportunity and seemingly unstoppable economic expansion. That dream was shattered by the Depression; and it is significant that Lloyd's run of success ended at the same time, even though his best sound films, *Feet First* and *Movie Crazy*, are no less good than his silents.

He bowed out at the age of 45, although there was one unhappy comeback in Preston Sturges's *The Sin of Harold Diddleback* (1947).

He seemed to be without regret. He was rich, and publicly he appeared as outgoing and energetic as the character in his films. Privately he was beset by the anxieties of a severely alcoholic wife and an alcoholic and self-destructive homosexual son.

From time to time he re-released his old films, and always welcomed critics and historians who showed any interest in the old times. Harold Lloyd died on March 8, 1971, to be outlived more than 20 years by his feisty elder and one-time boss, Hal Roach, who survived until last year, having witnessed his own centenary.

Clocking up his century of laughs

RECORD REVIEWS

Changing gear to chamber music

CLASSICAL

The Quatuor Mosaiques, young quartet though they are, are becoming established throughout Europe and on disc as one of the most searching and exciting musical of any playing today.

They have just drawn together their complete Op 20 Haydn Quartets in a double CD set (Astrée Auvidis E 8784), and I wouldn't be without them. With the fusion of artful period-instrumental style and sensuous delight which is their hallmark, they take us through the mind of Haydn in these six works: sorting out the new balance of movements in his young, evolving creatures, swashbuckling through their minuets, singing through their slow movements as sublimely as many a Mozart aria.

Sudden new colours surface and vibrate from deep inside the string texture. Rapid changes of rhythmic shape and size ring through the bright A major of the Sixth Quartet. A tiny gypsy minuet replies to the sustained variations at the heart of the Fourth. This is Haydn striking out on his own, away from the symphonies and operas he was writing for his supper at Eisenstadt and Eszterháza.

Another distinctive voice among young quartets is that of the seven-year-old Hungarian Keller Quartet. They have made it their business, in this Tchaikovsky centenary year, to record all three of his quartets, and here are the first two (Erato 2292-45965-2). The refinement and hypersensitivity to tone quality of their leader, András Keller, at once makes its mark in the murmured start of the First Quartet, as it slowly comes into rhythmic and harmonic focus.

No less characteristic are the fiery animal spirits they bring to the pounding downbeats of the third movement's dance, and the almost manically exultant finale. The Second Quartet is stamped with a rare authority within the rhetoric and instability which dominate it.

Finally a strong recommendation for a new recording of



Haydn: his mind is vividly revealed

Schubert's violin and piano sonatas. These posthumously published works are better known as sonatas; but Gidon Kremer and Oleg Maysenberg (DG 437 092-2) reject the diminutive and restate their stature with characteristic insight and passion. The A minor Sonata is handled as if any moment of relaxation or joy is almost too fragile to hold; the shock of the distant modulations within the G major is palpably felt.

HILARY FINCH

Sax and violins to suit every taste

It is pork-pie hat glued to his head at all hours, liquid refreshment always close at hand. Ben Webster was everybody's idea of the hard-living, foot-loose saxophone player. His wayward lifestyle led to ever more spectacular mood swings during his later years in exile in Europe. Concert promoters could never be sure that he would show up for an engagement, and if he did, there was no guarantee that he would have the energy to complete a set.

On a good day, all was forgiven. Though he may have been nicknamed "The Brute", the vigour and aggression of his up-tempo tenor playing were counterbalanced by a lush, shamelessly sentimental approach to ballads.

Both aspects are amply displayed on *See You At The Fair* (Impulse! GRP 11212), a handsome re-issue from 1964. Swaggering into "In A Mellow Tone" and "Someone To Watch Over Me" Webster is unmistakably in command, so much so that his musicians — with Hank Jones and Roger Kellaway sharing the piano duties — are apt to fade away into the background. Kellaway's occasional sorties on the harpsichord are a slight distraction.

Webster's tenor horn sails on regardless, and two bonus tracks — Oliver Nelson's moody arrangements for a nine-piece band — provide extra contrast. Webster can also be found in a lively variety of settings from the 1950s on the mid-price "Compact Jazz" compilation *The Verve Years* (Verve 513633). The sessions with Oscar Peterson are the pick of the bunch, and the only weak spot elsewhere is the appearance of a lumbering string section.

Twenty years after his death, something of his romantic spirit lives on in Scott Ham-

ilton, an instinctively melodic improviser who is in the middle of another British tour. *Scott Hamilton With Strings* (Concord CCD 4538) is an unusually sensitive example of the jazzman-meets-orchestra genre. Alan Broadbent's lush arrangements are more than a little bit reminiscent



Ben Webster: a musician of considerable sensitivity

of the work of Nelson Riddle. That well-known part-time saxophonist Bill Clinton is said to be one of the millions of record buyers who have been seduced by the warblings of Kenny G, the Barry Manilow of the soprano saxophone. With its slick production values and mild jazz flavour, *Breathless* (Arista 07822 18646) offers more of the same. Like Webster and Hamilton, Kenny G has an ear for a pretty tune, but any comparison stops there. If there are any readers whose bedrooms are fitted with mirrors on the ceiling, scarlet silk sheets and lava lamps, this could be the record for them.

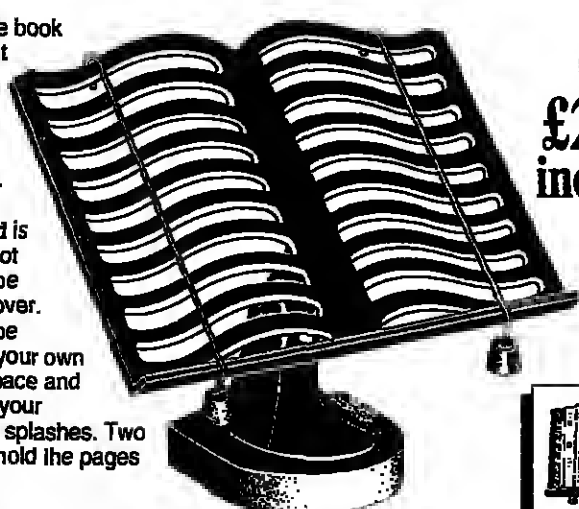
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TIM/0013

THEATRE: Kate Bassett is impressed by a company from Israel

Worth a second look

Real Time
Lyric Studio,
Hammersmith

Eva declares: "Leaving and coming back one doesn't do that." But *Real Time* pivots around people returning. Memories transport them into the past: the dead haunt the living; and couples endlessly separate and reunite as Jewish exiles return to their ancestral homeland, congregating in Eva's bar in Tel Aviv. The production — a visually and emotionally arresting piece of physical theatre by Nava Zukerman's Israeli Company Tmu-Na — itself warrants a second visit for its artistic brilliance certainly, but also for its sheer elusiveness. "Come again," I kept saying to myself.

It is not an easy 80 minutes, culturally or stylistically. Set on the eve of Yom Kippur in 1973 when Egypt attacked Israel, *Real Time* specifically commemorates and is richly informed by Jewishness. I could only wish I was myself better informed. Whole strata of significance were surely hidden from me in the final scene as the cast raised their hands to their lips and to their ears in some ceremonial sign language: as the silent character Little Girl (the physically poignant Tamar Dillenberger) offered us a bouquet of red carnations as religious song and Hebrew words filled the auditorium and as news-reel of the Yom Kippur War flickered on a television screen. Tmu-Na's triumph is that, against all the odds, such difficulties do not detract from such an engrossing and exhilarating theatrical experi-



Tamar Dillenberger and Eran Lavon of Tmu-Na

ence. With grief but without mawkishness, the piece captures the Jewish sense of rootlessness, isolation and alienation that persists even in the close community of Israel. More universally, the action — inspired by Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* — potentially investigates sexual passion. The four exiles in the bar — Eli, Milan her husband, Yudit and Ernest — are entangled in an adulterous knot of heterosexual and homosexual love. Enacted physically rather than verbally, their relationships effortlessly transcend into the archetypal. The choreography simultaneously sidesteps the obvious

and suggests multiple readings. Eli and Milan, quirkily sitting on a toilet, make love — or are they fighting? Or again, a simple bathroom routine superbly condenses Yudit's whole affair with Ernest as she spins away and is pulled back towards him, perhaps by the force of her own feelings, perhaps by his possessive energy.

Artistically Tmu-Na undeniably challenged comprehension. *Real Time*, however, has the vital raw edge of "poor theatre", quietly underlaid by exquisitely crafted direction: erotic, touching, funny and haunting.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Honey, I shrunk the quid

"Aye, I remember the Lam'nt lad," says Harry Drever, former manager of the Bank of Scotland in Lerwick. "He was pageboy at my wedding. We used to take him out for drives in the country and he'd sit in the back asking questions about everything. He's an arrogant little bugger, you know. I don't think he's fit for the job he's doing at all..."

Russell Miller on the much-maligned chancellor, in the new-look Magazine — with *The Sunday Times* tomorrow PLUS — the Style & Travel section is relaunched as a full-colour tabloid-magazine

SWITCH ON TO DAVID FLUSBERGER'S IN-DEPTH GUIDE TO THE BEST OF NEXT WEEK'S VIEWING

Brotherhood of mountain men

Everyman: Alive 20 Years On Tomorrow, BBC1, 10.25pm. The story is a famous one. A plane carrying 37 people — the First XV of the Old Christians' rugby team of Montevideo, Uruguay, plus friends, relations and supporters — crashes in the Andes. Six people die in the crash. More die in an avalanche a week and a half later. And yet more die, through hunger or hypothermia or just through failure of spirit and nerve. Three months later, 16 survivors are rescued. How had they survived? Chocolate and lichen, they told the press, and the miraculous assistance of God.

They were greeted as heroes. But two days after their rescue, a Chilean newspaper carried a photograph of the crash site, showing in the foreground two human legs, half-eaten. The truth emerged, although the survivors had already told it privately to their doctors, families, and priests. The word *Cannibals* blazes around the world.

Twenty years on, well-heeled men wearing nice sweaters in tidy homes remember the struggle for survival, with all its desperation, guilt and banality. They tell us how the forbidden food was rationed, what it tasted like, and give us insight into the individual psychologies up against the weird horror of the occasion: "Why are we here in the middle of a mountain having to eat our dead friends if we were going to Chile to play rugby?" Interviews with the 16 survivors are intercut



It's all about man against nature on television in the coming week: survival by cannibalism in the Andes; the dizzy science and technology disaster speculations of *New Nightmares*, and one man and his dogish struggles in the interests of conservation. I found it hard to choose the week's funniest programme. In the end, I decided that it's either the Australian true-life soap *Sylvania Waters* or the bizarre ramblings of that purposeful countryman, Phil Drabble.

with the original news footage of their rescue (some in oddly religious postures with beatific expressions as they welcome their deliverance, others wandering dazedly, still in their rugby club blazers), and shots of the survivors in tubby middle-age playing rugby. One of them is about to stand for the presidency of Uruguay. Only two of them admit to problems after they returned to their interrupted lives.

They all live within a half-mile of each other in the same affluent district of Montevideo they were born into, and see each other often. Even though some have wildly different versions of the meanings of their ordeal and survival, they

all feel part of a brotherhood. They also live within a half-mile of the families of those who did not survive. Only one woman among these agreed to be interviewed. She admits no ill-feeling, but you wonder what the rest would say if they agreed to speak their minds.

How do you carry on life in the suburbs surrounded by the relatives of people you have eaten? One of the impressions you get is that the battle for survival didn't end when the 16 were rescued in the Andes.

Home and Away Monday-Friday, ITV, 1.15pm and 5.10pm (local variations). Sophie's skin condition isn't any better and she's still bawling Mr Smithers over his sexual harassment. Blake gets a visit from his natural father and responds by running around a lot and then drooping, like a suddenly anaemic James Dean. Meanwhile, Blake's adoptive father, Alf, is preoccupied with keeping his funny little wig tight to his angry head. And Nick and Lou will be — intermittently — talking marriage and trust.

I still rate *Home and Away* as the best soap, but it has shown an alarming tendency to spoil some of its virtues. There's always one extended storyline, but the Nick-Lou saga has gone on far too long.

The point of the show, and of *Neighbours*, is its quick hit of story and resolution: a moral dilemma is presented, someone makes a decision, tragedy or triumph results. No messing. Need to resolve two stories quickly? Make them collide in a fatal car accident. The actress who plays Pippa, the emotional heart of the series, wants to leave? No problem. Just get a replace-

ment, give her the same name, and within a couple of weeks no one will care (unlike in *Dallas*, when everyone did care that Miss Ellie had changed her appearance) or even remember that she used to look that bit different.

Naked Sport: Welcome to the Sewer Monday, Channel 4, 9pm. It is hugely welcome to have a series that goes behind the polite myths of sporting action. This first one of six explores the sleazy-glamorous world of American heavy-weight boxing in the build-up to two very different fights: Evander Holyfield's world championship defence in Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas, against an over-the-hill Larry Holmes (who wears the word "Bum" on his training T-shirt); and an upstate New York bout between a young hopeful and a fat "stiff".

The Sewer is the name of the young hopeful's training gym, but the metaphor is obvious. The hopeful, Shannon Briggs, bobs around in a natty shirt and yellow dreadlocks and poses for photographs with a sadly elephantine Muhammad Ali, while his snaky manager, Mike Malone, looks for a suitable opponent to build up his protégé's 3-0 record. "I make no bones about it," he says. "We do plunder a few graveyards here and there; barely breathing corpses." And that's the time-honoured — or dishonoured — tradition.

It doesn't look much straighter up on the big-time, at the Holyfield fight. Bitter words are aired about the promoter Bob Arum and the Duva family (although Lou Duva, a squashed-faced Italian-American, who trains Holyfield, is one of the few who seem to love the sport). The programme pays too little attention to the boxer, and its makers are far too much in love with their ability to compose beautiful images to the cello-happy accompaniment of Barrington Pheloung (who wrote the music for *Inspector Morse*) to convey adequately the sweaty, blood-soaked atmosphere of boxing.

Still, it gives enough space for the characters to talk — and these people are, if nothing else, great talkers.

Without Walls: New Nightmares: Nature Says No Tuesday, Channel 4, 9pm. We're now on apocalyptic territory. Scientists and science fiction writers sprinkle around theories of nature — as enemy, mother, betrayed friend or



One man and his dogma: countryside defender Phil Drabble (Thursday, BBC2, 8pm)

uncaring thing — and then sit happily back to see which doomsday scenario of ecological cataclysm or genetic mutation they find most pleasing.

The scientist Robert May is puzzled by the apparent hypocrisy that we care about dying funny animals but celebrate the destruction of viruses. James Lovelock, the deviser of the Gaia hypothesis, describes the earth as a single entity. "Curiously like the ancient Greek goddess... She was kindly, feminine, nurturing and looked after everything. But if you transgressed you were zapped, but good." The writer Michael Crichton, however, sees it as a ridiculous egoism to think that we have the capacity either to destroy the planet or to save it.

New Nightmares is a rare series. It has a style entirely appropriate to its content, and its content is full of ideas.

QED: Art and Chips Wednesday, BBC1, 9.30pm. The British pop artist Richard Hamilton's most celebrated picture is "Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?", a

1950s collage of contemporary archetypes — musclemen and porno girl, tinned food, movie images — in a domestic setting. Hamilton has now followed his early love of technology (the cat's whisker radio) to his logical conclusions and swapped the scissors and paste for a computer.

This programme follows the same-of-the-art techniques he uses to make a 1990s version of his 1950s picture. It is a fascinating look into the mind and methods of an artist chasing perfection, and who thinks he has found it in his electronic studio.

My Wilderness Revisited Thursday, BBC2, 8pm. There's a red-faced man going around the countryside, bothering people. Phil Drabble potters purposefully about, kicking children off for confusing red-breasted birds with red-bottomed birds, saving the Peak District from holiday walkers, shaking his head sorrowfully at Alton Towers.

There are two reasons for watching this series. The first is to recognise Drabble's efforts against despoilers, politicians and politicians. The second is to attempt to uncover the man's hidden political agenda. As far as I can tell, he wants to build a world inhabited by badgers ("marvellously clean animals") and village butchers. The enemy is anyone who isn't a threatened life form. "Big business will scrape anything for their shekels, and bars are a case in point," he drabbles, disabblingly.

Sylvania Waters Thursday, BBC1, 9.35pm. Soap's opening titles (reminiscent of *Eldorado* or *Brookside*) featuring shots of the Sydney suburb of the title, then the camera slowly pans in on the interior of a riverside home. Noeline and Laurie are in the kitchen: she's manically wiping down surfaces, he's reading a car magazine at the breakfast counter. They're both in shorts, it's a hot day, and they're having an argument. "For God's sake," Noeline shouts, we hear, "of course he can have a bloody birthday party!"

The tune is immediately established and we are immediately gripped. This isn't soap, or rather it is, but it doesn't require actors or an expensive set, because this is the Real People sub-genre of soap opera, the fly-on-the-wall family saga interspersed with addresses to the camera — that winning formula which executive producer Paul Watson first brewed up in *The Family* in the early 1970s.

This first episode introduces you to the members of the family: Mick, who loves cars; Michael, the birthday boy, who would love to get away; Paul, who loves surfing, animals, and his pregnant girlfriend Dione (perhaps in that order); and resents his stepfather, Laurie; Noeline, who loves her money and occasionally worries she's an alcoholic; and Laurie (overweight, high blood pressure, a drunk). Few of them are embarrassed by the presence of the camera. Most welcome it, as confident, therapist, witness.

This episode also shows you the battlegrounds — money, cars, marriage, oedipal rivalries — that the Baker-Donaher family is going to be fighting over for the next few weeks.

BEST FILMS

TODAY
Diamonds Are Forever 1971, GB, (ITV, 8.20pm).
Hidden Agenda, 1990, GB (Channel 4, 10pm).
The City of the Dead, 1960, US (BBC1, 11.40pm).

TOMORROW
Jesse James, 1939, US (Channel 4, 12.45pm).
Peggy Sue Got Married 1986, US (BBC2, 10.15pm).

TUESDAY
The Young in Heart 1938, (BBC2, 9am).

WEDNESDAY
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1935, US, (Channel 4, 9.30am).

THURSDAY
Robin and the Seven Hoods, 1964, US (BBC1 1.35pm).

BEST TV

TOMORROW
London Marathon (BBC1, 8.50am).
Rugby World Cup Sevens (ITV, 1.40pm).
Coca-Cola Cup Final (ITV, 4.45pm).

WEDNESDAY
European Champions League: CSKA Moscow v Glasgow Rangers (ITV, 7.20pm).

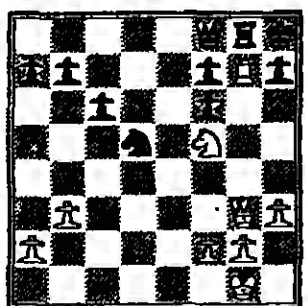
BEST MUSIC

The Second Heimat (today, BBC2, 9.35pm).

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent

This position is from the game Hodgson-Chudnoski, San Bernardino 1992. Julian Hodgson, the reigning British champion, found a way to deliver a quick mate in this position. Can you see how?



Solution to last Saturday's competition: 1...Nf3. The winners are J.T. Vivian-Griffiths, Monmouth; P.R. Sanders, Edinburgh; H.G. Apsimon, Frimley.

WORD-WATCHING

By PHILIP HOWARD

KISSAR
a. The mouth or face
b. A bowl lyre
c. A Russian village elder

PUKU
a. The belly
b. The Australian wood dove
c. Semolina unleavened bread

COCOCINELLA
a. Bullfighter's scarlet cape
b. A lady-bird
c. The Italian Santa Claus

TAMEIN
a. A steward or valet
b. Philanthropy, charity
c. The Burmese sari

Answers on page 13

A cuckoo in the human zoo

Few things are sacred to Mark Thomas, and most of those are funny



MARK Thomas, poet laureate of vitriol, wore a Julian Cope "Jehovahkill" T-shirt on Channel 4's *Saturday Zoo*.

One of the many, many pages of complaints the next morning asked why Mr Thomas always felt it necessary to "poke fun at Christians? You wouldn't taunt Jews like that, would you?"

"Dear, dear," Mr Thomas says, stirring his coffee and politely waiting away my Silk Cut fumes. "Sometimes, it feels as if these people have just woken up after a thousand-year sleep, and their brains have withered away. I want to walk up to them and shout: 'Excuse me, just one word, Jehovah. That's a little bit Jewish, isn't it? I'm trying to offend everybody, not just Christians. Christians are too easy. I'd rather go for someone who was harder to bait — such as a Buddhist. That would be a challenge.'"

Recently, Mr Thomas's progress has resembled that of a skylark on speed. Once the part-time fifth member of *The Mary Whitehouse Experience* when it was on Radio 1 — sandwiched between a weekly exclusive interview with Cher and every headbanger's favourite, *Rock On!* — he left because "I'm an egoist and, well, so is every comedian. Apart from Benny



Rot from within: Mark Thomas, "poet laureate of vitriol"

Hill: he's just dead." Mr Thomas reeled around the comedy circuit, getting "bitter and twisted. No, dearer, I think about what I wanted to attack." He sees "attack" as a comedian's role.

"Comedy is the rot from within. If you want to bring the system down from outside, you form a political party, hold rallies and start writing manifestos. If you want to corrode things from within, you pillory your skewer. You slash at reputations with that scalpel of wit."

Janet Street-Porter has a theory that comedy is the new rock'n'roll. If so, Rob Newman is Morrissey, Denis Leary is Axl Rose, and Mark Thomas is Sinead O'Connor. If there had been a laugh in it, Mr Thomas would have ripped up a picture of the Pope on *Saturday Zoo*.

"I mean it," he says. "That's the difference between me and other circuit-crawlers: I mean it." His road to provoking

So he became a builder, working on a building site by day, and hammering the comedy circuit by night. "It's the difference between bands who've had their guitars bought for them by mummy, and bands who've spent all week sweeping up cigarette ends in dirty streets."

A typical Thomas routine will cover politics — "the cabinet, at the moment, consists of people who are distracted by bright moving lights and fluffy toys"; sexuality; abortion — "My mum was a midwife, and I asked her 'At what stage when the sperm meets the egg does it constitute human life?' And she said: 'When you can claim child benefit for it'; and sideways at the Establishment comedy.

"Some people may find me offensive: I really can't see why," he grins. But is being offensive useful in any way? "I got into comedy because I wanted to be liked," he says, frankly. "For someone to like you because of what you say means they're relating to it on some level — either they didn't have the courage to say it themselves, or I've crystallised some vague feeling of unease they had themselves."

"You're only going to be offended by something I say if the basis of your beliefs is shaky and you feel the need to defend it."

And hell, if your beliefs can be brought down by an ex-bricklayer spouting his mouth off in the Comedy Store, they probably weren't that wonderful anyway."

CAITLIN MORAN

Mark Thomas will host one of Channel 4's new series, *Viva Cabaret*, next month. If there's any justice in the world, he will have his own series, simply titled *Outrage*, by the new year.

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